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POLICY IN A POKE

IF the Cabinet is to carry the country with it through the difficult days of transition from war to peace, its decisions affecting the lives of the people must be accompanied by explanations which are frank, comprehensive and factual. Understanding and confidence are not won by generalisations; and, whether the issue be merely the discontinuance of Summer Time, or the vitally important reallocation of man-power, the public wants its leaders to "get down to brass tacks." Time-worn official jargon, like "all considerations have been reviewed" will not do. When Mr. Attlee pleads vaguely our "commitments and obligations" in Europe and the Far East as reasons why "over-optimistic" forecasts of accelerated demobilisation may not be fulfilled, listeners to his broadcast feel that policy is still being sold them in a poke.

The Prime Minister did nothing to dispel justifiably entertained fears that the Service Chiefs are clinging to man-power urgently needed for the tasks of reconstruction at home, and that—regardless of the implications of the atomic bomb—they have absurdly grandiose conceptions of the Forces' appropriate post-war strength. He gave no indication that the Services had been set a definite demobilisation target to which they would be required within twelve months to work; nor did he enlighten the country (though he might well have done so) as to the numbers of men, in the roundest of round figures, required to fulfil our occupation commitments in any area. In recent weeks, he said, the rate of release had been speeded up to 45,000 a week; but, even so, little more than a million men and women would be out of uniform by the end of the year under the Class A—age-and-service—scheme. This represents little or no net increase in the industrial labour force, when account is taken of the loss of large numbers of "emergency" war workers.

As for the Class B release of essential workers, Mr. Attlee tacitly admitted that, as everybody knew, the scheme had broken down. When the end of the Far East war raised hopes of greatly quickened Class A demobilisation, volunteers for Class B were not forthcoming: the conditions of release—"direction," deferred encashment of gratuities, post-war credits and leave-pay, and only three instead of eight weeks' leave with pay—ceased to be attractive. To stimulate volunteering, the Government has now decided that all cash payments due to Class B shall be made at once; but Class A will still enjoy five more weeks of leave with pay on release, and for Class B the unpalatable proviso of indefinitely continued "direction," with the risk of severance from wife and children, remains. With a ceiling set at 10 per cent. of Class A releases, Class B at best is a drop in the man-power bucket. If key men, even on this modest scale, are to be obtained by damping hopes of Class A release, the policy will be bitterly resented by the Forces. It would have been preferable, in our view, to scrap the Class B scheme (at a great saving in administrative paper-work) and to concentrate on a forceful speeding up of Class A demobilisation, even if that involved departure from the principle of absolute parity between Home and Overseas members of each Group. It would be far more economical and popular to compensate handsomely in cash all men overseas due for release but temporarily held up by shortage of transport, rather than to keep thousands of men on futile fatigues in this country because a few score of their "opposite numbers" cannot be repatriated quickly enough from Burma.

We are left with the impression that the Cabinet is the prisoner of the Bevin Plan and cannot adapt its thinking to new and unforeseen circumstances. When Mr. Isaacs pleads the "manifest impossibility" of rapidly adjusting "the vast machinery of release," he sounds too much like a Minister in the pocket of his officials. "Orderliness" can be bought too dearly if the price is prolongation of shortages and a deficiency of exports due to lack of man-power. The need, accentuated by the termination of Lend-Lease, to get civilian production and transport going again at full blast, is imperative. If the Government's whole programme of social and industrial reconstruction is not to be jeopardised, an end must be put to the waste represented by unemployed soldiers and idle or uselessly employed machines. Why should "munitions," however widely construed, absorb 3,000,000 workers six months after VE-day? Better, and far cheaper, to speed up the switch-over both of munition-workers and, above all, of Servicemen, and (if "frictional" unemployment is feared) to provide both with the protection of an extended leave-with-pay scheme, subject to acceptance of reasonable, offered jobs.

Postscripts to Potsdam

The Council of Foreign Ministers, due to hold its first meeting in London next week, will have a formidable agenda. To begin with, the problems remitted to it affecting the future of Germany are clamant: apart from the millions of homeless refugees expelled by the Poles and the Czechs—whose Sudeten policy Mr. Bevin will have an opportunity of discussing with Mr. Fierlinger and Mr. Masaryk this week—a directive for Military Government is urgently required, defining the basis on which to assess the volume of plant "necessary for Germany's peacetime economy." Until this is done, no progress can be made in determining the scale of German reparations in kind. But it is not only the question of German reparations that will figure on the agenda. A peace settlement for Italy cannot be indefinitely postponed. So far as the Italian Empire is concerned, British and American views as to the appropriate method of liquidation have to be brought into harmony; and the future of Italy's frontiers in Europe is still, to say the least of it, fluid. Austria's claims on ethnographic and economic grounds to the return of the South Tyrol cannot be lightly dismissed; nor can the claims of Yugoslavia to the Trieste hinterland. Here the provisional so-called Morgan Line is likely to be the solution acceptable to the Foreign Office and State Department. Whether it will satisfy the Yugoslavs depends largely on the extent to which Italy is required to make good, both to Yugoslavia and Greece, the ravages wrought by Mussolini's armies.

Hungary and Her Neighbours

While relations between Hungary and Rumania—the two "arch-enemies" whose differences Germany consistently and successfully exploited—are to-day immensely improved, and no complaints are heard of the treatment of the Hungarian

minority either in Transylvania or in Yugoslavia, the attitude of the Czech Government towards the Hungarians in Slovakia calls for justifiable concern. Earlier this summer hundreds of Hungarians were interned under harsh conditions near Bratislava; great numbers were summarily ejected across the frontier; and in Kosice all Hungarians were forced to wear a distinctive M (for Magyar) on the pattern of Hitler's yellow star. Since the Potsdam agreement that there must be humane treatment of minorities, the expulsion of Hungarians from Slovakia appears to have been suspended, but racial discrimination goes on. The Czech Government is credited with the intention of arranging for an exchange of populations; but there are over half a million Hungarians in Slovakia, as compared with one hundred thousand Slovaks in Hungary, and the latter are by no means desirous of repatriation. Many of them are well-to-do farmers and the rest are beneficiaries of the present land reform measures in Hungary. It is bitterly ironical that protests in Budapest against the policy pursued against the Hungarian minority by President Beneš and his Government should have come not only from "patriotic" (and reactionary) Magyar circles but from Hungarian Communists and Social Democrats who were persecuted by Horthy as "Beneš agents."

The General and the Left

By refusing to meet the delegation led by Léon Jouhaux, General de Gaulle has precipitated a serious clash with the Left over his electoral proposals. The excuse that he could not negotiate with a trade union leader on political issues—thus endeavouring to capitalise the non-political tradition of the C.G.T.—looks pretty shallow. The Socialists, Radical-Socialists and Communists had each sent one of their most prominent leaders with Jouhaux to ask de Gaulle not to impose a "basically unfair" voting system. The National Council of French Resistance has strongly endorsed this protest. Can General de Gaulle fail to take account of this united *démarche* from parties which certainly command a big majority in the country? On the face of it, the General's version of proportional representation appears to be an attempt to gerrymander the election by giving undue weight to the rural vote in order to balance the preponderance of the Left in the towns. For this reason it is important that the Radical-Socialists agreed to take part in the protest delegation. Following the constitutional controversy, the electoral line-up is already sufficiently muddled. The Socialists and Communists seem less likely than ever to reach a national agreement; the Communists are coming out openly against de Gaulle whilst the Socialists may divide into those who support him and those who are prepared to come to local electoral pacts with the Communists and the section of the Resistance that follows their lead. The Radical-Socialists, with a Left wing looking to Herriot and a Right to Daladier, are similarly split. The General is succeeding in dividing the Left, but at the cost of bedevilling French politics.

After Japan's Surrender

The Japanese population is said to be submissive and even servile, but it is not easy to interpret the broadcasts and newspaper articles which now call, evidently by order, for a new moral orientation. So far, it seems that American policy does not aim at organic changes in the social structure of Japan. In that case, the Emperor will remain its pillar, and while the defeated heads of the military party will be eliminated for a time at least, the feudal organisation of the country will not be disturbed, and Big Business (in which the Emperor was deeply involved) will still dominate the towns. A society so built cannot fail to be imperialist, even if it is for a while disarmed. We gather that there is no intention of setting up a U.S. Military Government. The Diet, after meeting this week, will be dissolved and new elections promptly held. This is much too soon to allow of the formation of any genuine opposition, whether Liberal or Communist. In brief, it is clear that the Japanese believe that they were not defeated, but merely called off the fighting for the time being in view of the unfair advantage their enemies possessed in a bomb which, reports suggest, can kill or fatally wound 150,000 people in a split second.

Obstacles in Greece

Mr. Bevin has now a chance to discuss with the Regent the increasingly serious problem of Greece. The Voulgaris Ministry can scarcely survive the resignation of the Vice-Premier, M. Varvaressos, who complains that all his measures to restore financial order were frustrated by powerful personages involved in the Black Market. What is left of this Ministry has the confidence only of the Royalist Right and contrives to govern only because it rests on the British forces of Occupation. The evidence that a White Terror prevails comes not only from the E.A.M.: the same accusation is made as forcibly by the Greek Liberals, and indeed by many disinterested British observers. M. Sophoulis, the veteran Liberal leader, calls for the disbandment both of the armed gangs and of the National Guard, which should be replaced by the gendarmerie, now being reorganised. The preparations for elections and a plebiscite seem to consist chiefly in the exclusion of all known republicans from the register. M. Sophoulis states that in four electoral divisions with which he is familiar only 251 names are on the list: formerly they had 6,400 voters. General Plastiras estimates that on the average only 20 per cent. of the qualified citizens are on the register, most of them royalists. To hold elections in these conditions would be ridiculous. Clearly, they ought to be postponed, until something resembling order and decency is restored, which can hardly be done before the end of the year. In the meanwhile, it turns out that the political amnesty will apply to only about 3,000 of the Government's 17,000 prisoners. The obstacles in the way of creating a more representative Coalition Government increase every day, since the vindictiveness of the Right is matched by the growing bellicosity of Mr. Zachariades, the Communist leader.

Bargains in Washington

If reliance is to be placed on forecasts which have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* and other generally well-informed U.S. newspapers, Lord Halifax and Lord Keynes seem likely to be presented with stiff demands when they begin their talks in Washington on the aftermath of Lend-Lease. First, the Imperial preferences embodied in the Ottawa Agreement must be scaled down. On this point, which possibly accounts for Lord Keynes' visit *en route* to Canada, there would seem to be no insuperable obstacle to agreement, provided that there is a reciprocal lowering of the much more formidable American tariff. The real stumbling block is more likely to be the second stipulation which the U.S. State Department is credited with making. This is that a large part of the short-term indebtedness of Britain to her "sterling area" creditors in the form of blocked London balances should be paid off in dollars, provided on loan to Britain from the U.S.A. From the American standpoint the obvious advantage would be that the holders of these blocked balances would not be obliged to accept gradual repayment in British goods, but could forthwith satisfy their demands in the American market. To Britain the advantages are by no means obvious. We should be forfeiting our chance of early exports to countries from which we hope to obtain food and raw materials, and we should be entangling ourselves in dollar debts to the U.S.A. without any assurance of being able to obtain the dollars either for interest or for amortisation.

Turn-Round Problems

No one supposed that Industrial reconversion could be simple; but the sudden ending of the war in the Far East has naturally thrown out of gear plans, both official and unofficial, which were based on the gradual tapering off of war production and a gradual return of war workers as well as of men from the Services to normal peacetime jobs. The consequence is that an acute shortage of labour co-exists with some unemployment and a good deal more sheer "marking time" by workers in the war factories who are subject to the Essential Works Order and cannot be dismissed without special leave. These conditions lead to the clamour in some quarters for the complete and immediate liquidation of E.W.O. If, however, this were conceded, it would become impossible to secure priority in labour supply for the most urgent jobs, and there would be great difficulty in preventing a revival of luxury production before the supply of necessary goods had got near to becoming adequate. The capacity to absorb semi-skilled labour in civilian industries depends on the presence of the skilled workers needed for re-tooling and supervision; and a speed-up of release would obviously cause a sharp temporary rise in unemployment. This would be serious if there were no means of guiding the released skilled workers into the jobs in which they are urgently wanted to make possible the speedy re-absorption of the less skilled.

Industrial Compensation

The Trades Union Congress's memorandum on the question of compensation for nationalised properties follows the line which the Labour Party has taken for a long time past, in proposing that the main basis for the assessment of compensation shall be "net maintainable revenue," and that payment shall be made, except in the case of very small businesses, in State bonds and not in cash. The principle of "net maintainable revenue" is indeed obviously the fairest. Stock Exchange quotations are of no use, on account of their very great fluctuations and their bias in favour of short-term considerations. Replacement value is equally inappropriate, particularly now, when there is no reasonable basis for assessing it. It cannot, of course, always be easy to define what "maintainable" revenue is—much less to what extent actual past revenue ought to be discounted on account of the elimination of risk. There are special difficulties where concerns are operating under special franchises granted for a limited number of years (e.g., electricity supply companies) or where the capital of an industry is in the nature of a wasting asset (e.g., in coal mining). Each industry will present its special problems of valuation; but the T.U.C. Report gives on the whole as fair a statement and general solution of the problem as can be given without going into the particular circumstances of each industry.

Permanent Houses

Mr. Bevan has rightly stressed the danger that local authorities may give too much of their immediate attention to temporary housing and too little to the provision of permanent dwellings. The provision of temporary houses, like most things connected with the building industry, has been bungled. The only chance of getting temporary houses built in numbers at reasonable prices was to get the right model or models at an early stage and then promptly to hand out orders big enough to make it worth while for the chosen firms to treat the work as a real mass-production job and take all the necessary steps to ensure low-cost production. Instead of this, orders were shoved round too few at a time to make this worth the firms' while, with the result that we have been building temporary dwellings practically by hand, without the proper machinery for mass-production of components, and consequently at absurdly high costs. It is now too late to escape the results of this error, and the balance of advantage clearly lies in getting right down as speedily as possible

to the building of permanent houses. There is, of course, just as much need here for mass-production of standardised components in order to bring down costs; but the muddle over temporary houses has obscured this need, on which we hope the Government, in accordance with Mr. Bevan's declaration, is concentrating.

Family Discrimination

The Family Allowances Act, passed just before the Dissolution, contains an anomaly which the new Parliament, we trust, will speedily rectify. In the Act as it stands, it is a condition of benefit that the father of the family shall be a British subject, "born in the United Kingdom." This discrimination against the children of a naturalised British father is ungenerous and socially undesirable. Not merely does the naturalised citizen pay the same taxes as the true-born Briton; he is required to make, and has made in the past war years, the same contribution to National Service. Many refugees to whom this country gave asylum before and during the war, and to whom the industrial and intellectual life of Britain is indebted, have become naturalised and have married British women. There is no conceivable justification for discrimination against the families of such unions.

Indian Prisons

We are glad to learn that the penal settlement in the Andamans has been abolished, and we note that the India Office has replied at some length to the charges about conditions in Indian prisons made in our correspondence columns by Mr. Sen and others. This reply was given in a written reply from the Under-Secretary for India to a question put down by Miss Rathbone (*Hansard*, August 23rd). Most of Major Henderson's statement dealt with the period of unrest about fifteen years ago. The India Office naturally complains about the difficulty of investigating events alleged to have taken place so far back and, pending a further report promised from the Government of Bengal, we may accept the view that some of the allegations have been exaggerated. Major Henderson admits that at this period "resort was sometimes had to exceptional measures to maintain order, including flogging." He adds that the precautions against illegal flogging are much greater than Mr. Sen had suggested and that it is only permitted for mutiny, serious assault on officials and similar offences. But the official reply does not deal with Mr. Sen's charges of more recent date. In a letter published in our issue of July 28th, Mr. Sen quoted the 1943 *Government Report on the Prison Administration of the United Provinces* to show that in that area alone in one year there had been 83 cases of whipping, 4,086 cases of fetters and handcuffing and 29,344 cases of minor and major punishment such as penal diets inflicted at the discretion of the prison officials alone, apart from 264 whippings ordered by the law courts. He also quoted the Official Proceedings of the Orissa Legislative Assembly to show that Mr. Das, ex-Premier of Orissa and other political prisoners were beaten up in Berhampur Prison in January, 1944. Mr. Sen also alleged that prison officials often exceed their authority and have committed acts of cruelty against prisoners. Moreover, although other correspondents defended the British administration on the grounds that local affairs were under Indian control and that offences against prisoners were thus the responsibility of Indian Provincial Governments, Major Henderson agrees that where Provincial Governments are suspended—and this was so in all Provinces ruled by Congress Ministries—under section 93 of the Government of India Act, authority is assumed by the Provincial Governor, who is a British official acting under the Governor-General. The official reply to the charges made does not seem adequate, and we hope the further report promised by the India Office will throw more light on the matter.

LETTER TO AMERICA

Dear Cousin Jonathan,

While clearing up my papers the other day, I came across the copy of a letter I wrote you a dozen years ago.*. Then, as now, we were both worried over the problem of debt. Then, as now, our half of the family was watching your handling of it with something more than cousinly anxiety. I took the liberty of reminding you that the old family business of moneylender to the universe, which you had taken over, is a most exacting profession. I ventured to warn you that one cannot go on living in the old way when one adopts it. It calls for some very considerable changes in the moneylender's domestic arrangements: if he fails to make them, he may precipitate a crash in which the whole universe will be involved. That happened in due course—but I don't want to dwell on painful memories.

You may recollect that in that old letter of mine, I gave you some account of the plans the English half of the family adopted when it pioneered in this anxious but often remunerative business. We took it up gradually during the nineteenth century, adapted ourselves slowly to our new profession, but emerged at the end of the period, on the eve of the first World War, changed characters, leading an unrecognisably different life. We had financed the building of a great proportion of the world's railways: Australia was our mortgaged estate; we had our cables, factories, plantations and mines up and down the globe. The revenues of these enterprises flowed punctually to our shores. An immense and growing proportion of the family income came from abroad. The tea and the coffee, the wines and the fruits, the wheat and the meat were the tangible things with which the world paid its tribute to the usurer.

Creditors, as we saw our duty, should be an idle class: their debtors should feed them. One could watch this happening. With an adaptability rarely surpassed in Nature, we bred a specialised leisured class, whose specific function was to consume our surplus of imports. Carefully refraining from any productive activity, they played at soldiers, ran "gentlemen's" estates, hunted foxes and drew their dividends.

This dependence on interest from overseas governed our fiscal policy. It must come in. It could come in only as goods. Free Trade was, accordingly, the policy of the sagacious usurer. The consequences to our farmers were not happy. The acreage under the plough steadily declined, and with it the number of families that got their living from the soil. The system had its defects, but as an essay in national bookkeeping it worked. Its foundation was the principle that creditors must receive in imports a higher value than they export, while debtors must export more than they receive. It is not a pretty prinple. It makes parasites. But international money-lending can operate on no other basis.

In retrospect, dear Jonathan, I'm glad that I didn't advise you to follow our example. I knew you well enough to feel sure that you would never do it. You were, up to the middle of the last war, on the balance a debtor. Your society had the economic structure and the psychology appropriate to that condition. You aimed at a surplus of exports and you even raised your tariffs. You idealised activity and the relentless expansion of production. You will never sit back in your chair and let your debtors feed you. Your captains of industry won't take to fox-hunting, nor will you let the Middle West go back to prairie. But after all, the conundrum remained: Why take up the profession of usury, if you cannot receive your reward in the shape of a surplus of imports? I ventured to put this question to you and though I could not guess what novel solution you would discover, I assured you that our side of the family cherishes "a silent admiration for your inventiveness."

You more than justified my confidence. Lend-Lease was a great invention. We praised its generosity at the time, but it was much more than this. Your inspiration of genius had this great merit, that it enabled you to follow your own congenial instincts. You went on expanding your production and your surplus of exports over imports grew steadily with each year of the war. I liked especially your great President's way of putting it: he "cut out the dollar sign" from the whole transaction. You renounced interest altogether and by way of repayment you were content (or so we supposed) to take what we were able to put into the common pool.

I'm not at all sure, my dear Jonathan, that you sacrificed anything when you adopted this bold solution of your problem. For the oddest part of your experience as a usurer was that in the decade between the two wars during which you practised this art on a big scale, you never did receive from abroad the interest to which you were entitled. Your new foreign loans more than balanced the total interest due. Eventually, had you persisted, you would have bought up this planet, but you would have drawn no income from your terrestrial estate. Your investments were as sterile as treasure laid up in heaven.

By a genial improvisation Lend-Lease made an end of that absurdity. Here at last you discovered what to do with the surplus which no modern industrial society has ever been able to absorb. You boldly gave it away and throve—as genius deserves to thrive. The older half of the family watched you with a mixture of admiration and envy, for we had to concede that we never had had the audacity to stave off repletion in this way. We wondered, from time to time, how you would adapt your technique to peacetime conditions. We did not ourselves expect to profit by it: ours is an old firm, with stubborn traditions, and we have our pride. But when I listened to your Mr. Wallace—and believe me, I used to listen to him with cousinly pride—I thought I could guess what you meant to do. His dream of equipping the backward agricultural regions of the earth with machinery seemed a perfect occasion for your new technique of Lend-Lease. Yesterday you flew guns to Chungking across the Himalayas and you did it for nothing. I paid you the compliment of supposing that to-morrow you meant to send turbines and lock-gates to the Yangtse on the same terms.

It seems, dear Jonathan, that I misunderstood you. What I mistook for a brilliant discovery in the art of money-lending was something else. It was an act of wartime generosity and nothing more. It did great credit to your heart, but your head was less inventive than I had supposed. And now, if I grasp your intentions, you are going back to business as usual, with strict book-keeping. For my own part I can, with an effort, adjust myself in a little while to the new relationship. It will be, to my regret, somewhat less intimate than in recent years. I shall have to adopt the rules of conduct appropriate to debtors—export as much and import as little as possible.

It is not this that worries me when I think of the future. If I may write frankly as a superannuated veteran in the profession you have taken over, what concerns me is a doubt whether it really is "business" that you are pursuing. What is the inducement that leads you to strive for bigger and better exports, even if you have to go on lending and investing your surplus abroad? Not gain, for you cannot receive your material compensation, so long as your visible exports exceed your imports. Not leisure; you have never adopted the fox-hunting solution of the money-lender's problem. Is power, then, to be your reward? You can have it: indeed, you cannot escape it. But long experience in our art teaches the lesson that the most dangerous and unpopular thing a usurer can do is to use the leverage his resources give him to improve his own views upon his debtors. I am sure you

* *N.S. & N.*, December 17th, 1932.

mean well, when you propose to guide me back into the road of free enterprise and unregulated trading. Right or wrong, I have taken my decision. With that road, believe me, I am painfully familiar and no inducements you can offer will persuade me to follow it again. There I can speak not merely for your cousins in this island, but for their neighbours on the Continent. To put it bluntly, dear Jonathan, this is now a State-planned world in which you are operating. Forgive me, if I venture to doubt whether your present technique squares with the rules either of the old time or the new. It lacks the sober merit of orthodoxy to which my own practice used to conform; nor has it the far-sighted audacity of Mr. Roosevelt's improvisation. Is it too late to ask you to review it?

Your affectionate cousin,

JOHN

OUR JOB IN GERMANY

EVERY member of the Control Commission realises that this winter will be a supreme test of British administrative capacity. For good or ill we have decided that the Germans are not fit to rule themselves, and have assumed the entire responsibility for the government and for the re-education of the Germans in our Zone at a time of desperate economic crisis. If we are there to pass judgment on the Germans, they are equally passing judgment on us. If we fail to cope adequately with the job we have taken on, then in German eyes Western Democracy will have proved itself incapable, and Germans will look elsewhere for their salvation.

We have set ourselves a two-fold task. In the first place, we have got to solve the short-term problem of getting the Ruhr going, and thereby preventing a European fuel crisis this winter. But we have also to keep in mind the long-term task of enabling the anti-Fascist forces to establish a German democracy. At present we have done virtually nothing towards either of these objectives. Latest reports indicate that the Ruhr coal production to-day is not much more than 15 per cent. of the 1938 level. We are budgeting on achieving this autumn 25 per cent. of normal electric power supply and 35 per cent. of normal gas supply, and on supplying no coal whatsoever for German domestic use. We hope to maintain a ration somewhere between 940 and 1,200 calories for the German civilian, which is not very different from the ration the S.S. gave their prisoners in the outer camps at Buchenwald and Dachau. An effort is being made to provide the Ruhr miners with an adequate ration of about 3,400 calories. But anyone with any knowledge of the miners' mentality could have predicted that the German miner, like the miner in every other country, will divide his ration with his wife and children and aged parents, if they are starving—as they are. As a result, the miners are still not eating enough to be able to dig coal.

All the reports received agree further that the political situation in the Ruhr is calculated to prevent any increase of production. By and large, the managers and foremen of Nazi days have been retained in office, and in many cases are the paramount influence in the local administration. An anti-Nazi miner, for instance, who returns from the Army after being away for five years, goes to the labour office in his home town only to find the old officials still there, and only too ready to make the decisions where he shall work and whether he shall have a house. He finds the police-chief is the self-same man who previously organised a detention camp "as a sort of subsidiary branch of the mine to which restive miners were sent." He finds that all political self-expression, including German-produced newspapers and periodicals, is still forbidden; and, though Trade Unions are in principle allowed, no effort whatsoever has been made to encourage the formation of a Miners' Union for the whole of the Ruhr area. The most that has been permitted is the formation of small Works Committees in individual mines and factories.

In brief, the social structure of the Ruhr area has remained completely unchanged. Some party officials have been dismissed or arrested. Some big industrialists have disappeared or been taken into custody. But nothing whatsoever has been done to transform the social system which, under the Kaiser and under Adolf Hitler, was the mainspring of German militarism. The only difference now is that a few harassed Military Government officials, for the most part without knowledge of German or of the mining industry, sit in their offices giving instructions to the old managers. And behind them, disconsolate within their cantonments, stand British troops, who are beginning to wonder whether we fought six years of total war for this.

Indeed, one of the most serious problems this winter will be the morale of our own occupying forces. Life in Germany will anyway be a horrible experience, but it is made much more horrible by the almost complacent apathy of many officers. Ever since the disastrous Roosevelt-Churchill decision last September that no economic rehabilitation should be undertaken in Germany, "except such as is necessary to prevent starvation or disorder," the planning staffs have schooled themselves to assume the inevitability of an economic catastrophe. If you repeat to yourself every night, "Whatever we do, the bastards are going to starve," you gradually engender a mood of indifference which prevents your doing even the little you can to prevent starvation. By talking tough Vansittartism an officer can only too easily make himself not tough—that is a moral quality which at least includes energy—but indifferent to the fate of the Germans for whom he is responsible, so long as he gets his own food and drink and pleasures.

On top of this mood of indifference come the temptations of the Black Market. Looting during operations is a morally pardonable offence. But participation on a large scale by the Occupying Forces in a Black Market run by the defeated enemy can rapidly become a menace both to discipline and to good administration. Alan Moorehead recently pointed out in a brilliant article that the real sin, both of the German people and of the Concentration Camp guards, was indifference to the sufferings of people whom public opinion dismissed as sub-human or outside the pale.

One cannot sometimes help feeling there is a nightmare resemblance between the relations of the Occupying Forces to the German people and the relations of the German guards to the inmates of a Concentration Camp. The S.S. left the actual administration of the camp almost entirely to the inmates. They selected reliable block leaders, supplied them with the inadequate rations for the whole block, and then left them to fight it out among themselves, only interfering to maintain discipline. The S.S. guards were well fed and well clothed, and were given a moral escape for accepting as justifiable the glaring contrast between their warm quarters and their well-laden tables and the terrible conditions of the prisoners they were guarding. I would not for one moment suggest that this parallel should be regarded as anything but a grim warning. But moral degeneration *must* set in when officers or troops are given the job of policing a starving population, and are encouraged to talk about the danger of pampering the Hun. What we can expect this winter is that British troops and officials under such conditions will in many cases refuse to become indifferent and repudiate the so-called "tough" attitude. But in that case discipline will rapidly be undermined. The troops will give their food away and will swing violently into a sentimental pro-Germanism and sentimental criticism of the British administration. Vansittartism will have achieved precisely the effects which Lord Vansittart was most anxious to avoid.

What can be done to meet this crisis? The Potsdam communique has provided the Control Commission with a directive wide enough to permit a complete transformation of the existing policy, which is still based on the disastrous Roosevelt-Churchill decision at Quebec last autumn. Under the Potsdam directive we could, if we had the will to do so, collaborate wholeheartedly with the anti-Fascist forces in Germany in the task of moral regeneration and economic reconstruction. Our men could be permitted to follow their natural inclinations and devote themselves this winter to working with the anti-Fascists in an effort to get the Ruhr mines going. But that would mean—and we cannot burk this problem—that the Control Commission was encouraging an orderly social revolution in the Ruhr. All reports arriving here agree that anti-Fascist groups have survived in considerable strength throughout the area. Are we prepared to help them to do the job themselves?

The trouble is that we are haunted by fear that our natural decency may lead to softness, and inhibited by the Vansittartite doctrine that no distinction can be made between good and bad Germans. So we tried ourselves to carry out the purge of Nazis and the selection of those to replace them—and brushed aside the proferred assistance of anti-Nazi groups. We have tried to be tough to *all* Germans indiscriminately; with the result that we have been indiscriminately soft and indiscriminately tough—in patches. Quite recently the Americans seem to have decided to accept the Russian method—to limit themselves to the selection of anti-Fascist leaders whom they can really trust and then leave it to them to edit their own newspapers, to organise their own political parties and trade unions, and, generally, to assume political responsibility in their own localities. The British authorities are apparently still reluctant to take this course; they regard it as premature.

There can be little doubt that, as long as the job of Military Government is left to men who have not their heart in the work and whose real desire is to get back home, the British authorities will continue to consider it premature to trust the German anti-Fascists until we withdraw from Germany. At present there is hardly a senior officer in the Ruhr, for instance, with any knowledge of trade unionism, of mining, or of Germany. Among the younger men, especially in the Intelligence Corps, there is first-rate material. But their spirit will soon be broken by the indifference and the lack of political training in the higher commands. What is the use of sending in reports and recommendations when you know in advance they will not be implemented? Why worry to give anti-Fascists a sense of responsibility when your high-ups are convinced that all Germans are much of a muchness, and deserve what is coming to them? Stagnation creates apathy; indifference breeds desperation. The core of first-rate British talent, which exists in Germany to-day, will be rotten by next spring—unless it receives help from outside.

What is needed is a completely new spirit in the British Zone. This can only be achieved by the appointment of a Civilian High Commissioner with a clear mandate from the Cabinet to take the risks—and of course there are risks—implicit in the policy of helping the anti-Fascists to clean up their own country.

But more is needed than that. The job of rehabilitating and re-educating the British Zone can only be undertaken by volunteers who will really devote themselves to the task and who can look forward, when they leave Germany, to a similar career, either in the Empire or at home. The Control Commission should be staffed either by volunteers from Whitehall, local government and the trade unions, or by young Service men who can train themselves in Germany and know that, when they have done their job, they will go on to similar expert jobs elsewhere. We are desperately short, for instance, of qualified administrators. What better training for such men than five years in Germany? We are desperately short of energetic young men for key jobs in local government—as surveyors, medical officers of health, sanitary inspectors, and so forth. Here, too, five years with the Control Commission would be a useful training. Nothing would seem impossible after that. What we must realise is

that the task of the Control Commission, this winter and for at least five years, demands the best administrative talent which we possess, and —even more important—a sense of vocation. As long as work in the British Zone brings with it no prospects of a permanent career in administration, and so long as the men of courage now working there are surrounded by an atmosphere of indifference and defeatism, the Zone will be a credit neither to democracy nor to this country.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

JUST after the aircraft had finished circling round Essen and Dusseldorf (we were travelling by kind invitation of the Air Ministry) I read in the *Observer* Sir Arthur Salter's remark:

> There is only one possible means of quickly meeting the now desperate need—the rapid expansion of production in the Ruhr. The undamaged mines in this area are capable of producing at the rate of at least 100 million tons a year. . . .

This is indeed a staggering assertion to read when you are looking down on the Ruhr itself. First we saw, not far below, the remains of the little town of Wesel, standing out like the ruins of Pompeii in the brilliant sunshine. The rubble had been cleared away; the famous bridge which the Commandos blew up lies in the water with the new British Army bridges by its side. Wesel was destroyed by high explosive as part of the advance into Germany. We went on to the great Ruhr towns, mainly burnt out by incendiaries. They look quite different, because most of the buildings still stand—but as hollow shells. Inside Dusseldorf—the size of Manchester—Essen, and other towns, I could not see a single ungutted building. There were a few that looked habitable in the suburbs. I asked myself how far Salter's remedy can be achieved. Looking down on Essen, for instance, where the vast area of Krupps is a tangle of metal like one of those wire meshes used to clean saucepans, I had a hard job to remember that experts declare that a large percentage of the machinery is still usable, though much of it is now getting rusty from exposure. Occasionally there were chimneys smoking, and I am told that as much as 25 per cent. of Essen is in production. Machinery can be restored even in a town which has been completely gutted by fire. The underground mining machinery, of course, is also intact.

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Then there is the problem of servicing the factories. Water in the Ruhr, I understand, has to be fetched in buckets, and what about gas and electricity? Salter's answer, of course, is right; if it were "operations," engineers would have emergency services going in a few weeks. Communications? Well, the sunk barges in rivers and canals could soon be shifted; the Royal Engineers put up bridges, as we know, in no time, and as for railways, I saw three trains running in the course of the afternoon. Three times we circled round the notorious marshalling yards at Hamm. Countless bomb craters, of course, but the lines have been restored. Are there any trucks? If, as I suppose, there is an absolute shortage here, lorries would have to do most of the job. They lie idle in hundreds of thousands in Allied territory. That still leaves the biggest problem of all; where are the workers to live? If machinery is quickly restored, houses are not. But there is still a working population in the Ruhr, living in cellars and perhaps some rooms of the less gutted houses. Again, some shelter can be improvised in time for this winter if the soldiers, who now are incredibly miserable at not being demobbed and not doing anything, are given the word to get going.

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On our way to the Ruhr we coasted above the flooded shores of Walcheren Island. The dykes there were broken by the R.A.F. in the great offensive and the sea water has penetrated deep, stopping short of the main streets of Middelburg, but leaving only the northern part of the island undamaged. The Dutch have taken a gloomy view; they have not the machinery necessary for rebuilding against the tide, and in deep water. On Tuesday I was delighted to hear from the B.B.C. that the Forces were using the remains of Mulberry to repair the dykes. Here at last is an example in a small way of the imaginative use of war mechanism and organisation to heal the ravages of war itself.

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The Tories are taking careful note of the mood both of the new Labour Members in the House and of the local Labour Parties. A friend of mine, who ought to know, tells me that Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bracken are now expressing their jubilation that it is the Labour Party which is having to tackle the problems of transition from war to peace. They are talking confidently about a split in the Labour Party within the next couple of years, and they seem to believe that it will come about by a repetition of the 1931 tactics. My own feeling is that there should be little chance for such tactics to succeed with the new Parliament. Mr. Morrison has very sensibly decided not to revive the old Consultative Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party which completely failed to maintain liaison between the Government and the Back Benches in the 1929 Government. The present proposal to set up a series of Specialist Committees to study the work of the various Ministries is much more promising, provided that they have a cooperative spirit towards the Minister, but do not allow themselves to be muzzled by "off record" confidences. But no machinery, of course, can in itself be sufficient to maintain harmony. That can only be achieved if the Government manages to convince the Back Benchers that it is really getting on with the job. The prevalent mood is well illustrated by a letter in this issue from Major Woodrow Wyatt, M.P. for Aston. I would predict that, instead of a 1931 crisis producing a new National Government, we shall have steady pressure from the many informed and resolute Back Benchers who will be determined to transform the Labour Government into a Socialist Government.

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Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist leaders seem to have reached a useful and very Chinese compromise. Since the problem of the two rival armies is at present insoluble, it is postponed. Yenan will cease to behave as if it were an independent State, and for the first time the Chungking Government will include several responsible Communist leaders. The National Assembly, which was to meet (with a personnel mainly nominated in 1936) in the autumn, has been postponed for a year, and so have the elections for which it was to arrange. If they had been held this year they would have been boycotted by the Democratic League as well as the Communists. It now looks as if we may rely on peace in China for twelve months; what happens after that depends on the development of Chinese public opinion in the next phase.

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I am very glad to hear from Lord Nathan that the Spanish Republicans who were cooped up with German Prisoners of War at Camp 168 have at last been granted the concessions for which they were begging for so many months. They are now housed in a hostel of their own, wear green uniforms instead of the detested patched brown outfit of the German prisoners, and are treated like Italian anti-Fascist prisoners. Most of them want to rejoin their comrades in France, and I have good reasons to believe that, if the French Government agrees, they will soon be on their way. I was also interested to hear the other day from the War Office that the policy which Sir James Grigg had laid down of keeping German anti-Nazis here, and sending back to Germany the unregenerate Nazis, has now been reversed. In future, all demands by the Control Commission for specialist anti-Nazi personnel —from judges down to morse-operators—will be met as far as possible by the despatch of prisoners-of-war from this country. The place of these anti-Nazi prisoners will be taken by other prisoners from Germany more suitable for the hard labour of clearing the rubble of our blitzed cities. I was also assured that the unregenerate Nazis will all be kept here on their present work. So one very silly bee has been banished from the War Office bonnet along with the late Secretary of State for War.

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The Editor was rash indeed to assume last week that he could end a correspondence on so emotional a subject as the death penalty in Russia after a mere couple of months of toing-and-froing. Note that there is no suggestion that children are in fact shot in Russia; the point is only whether under Soviet law for certain exceptional crimes of banditry and violence, children are liable to the death penalty. That redoubtable champion of liberty for Soviet citizens, Dr. John Baker, is still, it seems, not satisfied with the upshot of the argument between Pritt and Koestler, though the latter was allowed the last word. *A fortiori*, the other side are discontented not to have the matter definitely settled on the Soviet side. I have now talked the whole thing over with two lawyers who have carefully read the Code, the amendments and the decree to which Koestler referred. The position seems quite clear. Article 22, which said that no person under the age of 18 could be executed for any offence, has never been amended either explicitly or by implication. Koestler's mistake arose when, because in the spring of 1935 juveniles were found to be taking part in bandit operations, "criminal responsibility" was extended to persons under 18, and one of the punishments for such crimes was execution. But in the revised Code of the autumn of 1935, which includes all the amendments and reprints of the regulations concerning responsibility of children, it is again explicitly stated that the death penalty is not applicable to juveniles. In a word, the other punishments for banditry are applicable to child bandits, but execution is not.

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The war is really over, but no one here feels inclined to revive the forced gaiety of Victory celebration. I had, I admit, one exciting moment when, pushing my way through packed Piccadilly and evading exploding firecrackers as best I could, I found Ed. Murrow broadcasting to the United States on the pavement outside the Criterion. He hung on like gay death to a microphone at the end of wires falling from a first story window, and he kept up a good-natured chatter while the crowd swept him sometimes back against the wall and sometimes half-way to the Eros statue. He threw the microphone to me and I found myself talking to some unknown millions in the United States with absolutely nothing to say except that people seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The only other V-day incident that I shall recall with much pleasure occurred in a tiny village in Essex last Saturday. It was decided that the children of the village, numbering something between 40 and 50 in all, should be given a treat. Practically everyone in the village made cakes or jam sandwiches or helped in some way. Then as a surprise there was an ice-cream for every child, and a beaker with a Donald Duck picture on it. Just as tea began an R.A.F. Sergeant from an aerodrome near by got off his bike, pushed a pound note into our hands and rode off again. The till of the village pub was ransacked for change and the pound note changed into forty sixpences, one in each beaker. Then the children rampaged into my garden and carried away all the windfall apples. They demanded a ride in my car and I drove them up and down in relays while they sang at the top of their voices, "You Are My Sunshine." Our village had the right idea, and V-Day is like Christmas—it is a celebration for children.

CRITIC

PRELUDE TO ITALY'S ELECTIONS

SIGNOR NENNI, the Italian Socialist leader and one of the two deputy-Premiers in Signor Parri's Coalition Cabinet, who has been entrusted with the job of organising the first general elections to be held in Italy since the downfall of the Fascist dictatorship, would like the voting to take place before the end of the year, possibly in November. His view is shared by many of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Others, among them the leaders of the Liberal Party and of the Christian Democratic Party, would like the elections to be postponed until February or March next year. Whatever the date, it is the firm intention of Italy's democratic leaders that the Italian nation shall express its will freely. It has already been decided that women will vote as well as men. No definite decision has been reached yet on the system of voting; but it is likely that there will be some kind of P.R. on a regional basis. The elected Assembly will be more than a Parliament; it will be a Constituent Assembly.

It is hoped in Italy that the political atmosphere will clear after the elections. Since the coup-d'état of July 1943, every Italian Government has had a provisional character. The last four Cabinets were coalitions of a number of democratic parties. The coalitions were unwieldy, and governmental action usually lacked energy and drive. To say that the proper functioning of the Italian Government has been prevented by the presence of Allied troops and of the Allied Commission, is only part of the truth.

The healthiest political achievement of the Italian nation during the last few years was the organisation of the Committees of National Liberation (C.N.L.). Under various names, they began to be organised clandestinely in important Italian towns at the end of 1942, when a dictatorial Fascist Government was still compelling an unwilling nation to fight for Nazi Germany. Responsible leaders of underground organisations, like the Action Party and the Communist Party, together with representatives of the Socialist, Liberal and Christian Democratic movements, which Fascism had been unable to suppress, reached agreements from which arose the future organisation of the C.N.L. The agreements had one definite aim—the overthrow of the Fascist regime and the freeing of Italy from the German alliance.

When the Germans took over after the armistice of September 8th, 1943, and established a puppet Fascist Social Republic, the C.N.L. did not disappear. After a few weeks of disorder and confusion, the C.N.L. organisation, having gone again completely underground, started to function both in central Italy and in northern Italy. It became the central element of the Resistance movement. It established contacts with the Allies. It had its own military organisation based on the Patriot or Partisan formations, existing in practically every district, but particularly in the Alpine valleys, in the big industrial towns and in certain areas of the Apennines.

Before the liberation of Rome, the C.N.L. in German-occupied territory had two main centres—one in Rome and one in Milan. The Rome C.N.L. was formed by representatives of six parties—Liberals, Christian Democrats, Labour Democrats, Action Party, Socialists and Communists. The Milan C.N.L. was formed by representatives of five parties only, the Labour Democrats having at the time practically no organisation in northern Italy. Smaller groups, like the Italian Republican Party and the Christian Socials were represented in some of the regional and the provincial C.N.L.s. After the liberation of central Italy in the summer of 1944, the Milan C.N.L. was acknowledged as the central organ of the Resistance movement in German-occupied territory. The remarkable thing in the history of the Italian Resistance is the real co-operation which has existed between the different groups. This happened in spite of the difficulty of conciliating at times the fundamentally divergent points of view of Catholics and Democrats, of Liberals and Marxists.

Since April 1944, the C.N.L. organisation in German-occupied territory has been paralleled by a C.N.L. Government in liberated territory. Except for the few months during which the Action Party and the Socialist Party remained outside the Government, an even balance was established in the Cabinet between the six parties which had been represented in the Rome C.N.L. This may have been a necessary expedient to ensure the collaboration between the parties at a time when it was impossible to know what following each party had in the nation. On the other hand, it seemed rather incongruous that the small Labour Democratic Party should count, in Government decisions, as much as the Christian Democratic Party or the Communist Party.

It is difficult to assess at present the relative strength of the various parties. In northern Italy, during the Resistance period, the Patriot formations (the military side of the C.N.L.) usually had a political colour. It was estimated that about two-fifths of the Patriots were in the Garibaldi formations, mostly connected with the Communist Party. A little more than one-fourth of the Patriots were in the G.L. formations, connected with the Action Party. One-fifth, or a little less, were in the formations originally organised by officers and men of the disbanded Italian Army. These later on attached themselves mostly either to the Liberal Party or to the Christian Democratic Party. Smaller groups were in the Matteotti formations connected with the Socialist Party.

A few weeks after liberation, elections took place in several large factories of northern Italy. The Communists usually received more votes than the Socialists and the Christian Democrats, but only in exceptional cases did they obtain an absolute majority. It should be kept in mind that bona fide Patriots represent less than one per cent. of the voting population and industrial workers less than one-fourth.

Liberation brought everywhere a rapid development of political activities. The Christian Democratic Party expanded on the whole more than any other party. The Communist Party also increased and maintained its position as one of the two largest parties. The Socialists gained considerably, chiefly in the North. The Liberals also won adherents, mainly in the South. The Action Party lost. New political groups, which had not participated in the Resistance, appeared on the political scene. If things do not alter fundamentally, and the voters feel free to express their opinions, it is likely that the two largest parties represented in the future Constituent Assembly will be the Christian Democratic Party and the Communist Party. The Socialists have undoubtedly great possibilities—at least in northern Italy, where 22 years of Fascism have not obliterated the traditions of the party which was once led by Turati and Treves. It is still uncertain, however, if the Socialist leaders will know how to take advantage of their opportunity. The Liberals, the Action Party, the Labour Democrats, the "traditional" Republicans, the Sicilian separatists and the other smaller groups are likely to manoeuvre—switching their support from the Christian Democratic bloc to the Collectivist bloc, neither of which may achieve an absolute majority. Groupings are likely to change: the parties which may side for instance with the Communists and the Socialists on the burning question of Republic versus Monarchy are not likely to side with them on questions of economic organisation or of foreign policy.

The Communist Party is now reaping the fruits of their patient underground organisation, of their activity in the Resistance, of the prestige of Russian victories, of a widely-spread lack of confidence in the possibility of re-establishing a Liberal-Democratic political and social structure, of popular realisation that Communism in 1945 is not the unruly violence connected with the Bolshevism of 25 years ago. The Christian Democratic Party appeals to an even larger number of people who are attracted not only by its progressive social programme but chiefly by the fact that, in their efforts to maintain a political structure based on law and order, the Christian Democrats seem to guarantee that personal security which is sadly lacking in many parts of the country. For the same reason, the Liberals appeal to narrower groups of the population.

Many people in Italy wonder if there will be enough order in the country to enable the voters to express freely their opinions. The Fascist Party is no longer in existence but there are in Italy many ex-Fascists who are ready to take advantage of the existing confusion to undermine the attempts made by the parties of the C.N.L. to establish a working democracy. Order, or the lack of it, depends largely on what economic conditions prevail at the time of the elections. The outlook at present is definitely serious and can be improved only if the United States and the British Commonwealth assist a nation which is in desperate need of foodstuffs, raw materials and means of transportation.

MAX SALVADORI

MONEY AND MUSIC

ECONOMICALLY speaking, a symphony orchestra is not a productive unit. Its only achievement is sound, sound which dies beyond the reach of our ears as soon as it is created. But modern economics allows a place for such a body in its calculations, for entertainment is valuable as a stimulus to real solid production. Thus a symphony orchestra is allowed to live, even in a country mobilised for total war. And if it is allowed to live, its individual members must be provided for, and the expenses incurred in the organisation of concerts must be found.

There's the rub! For a symphony orchestra not only is non-productive, but is also not self-supporting. And at this some level-headed people will sympathise with the wealthy industrial magnate who, pressed to a Wagner performance at Covent Garden, took one look at the array of a hundred musicians in the orchestral pit, remarked, "It looks like a musicians' benefit to me," and left the opera house for ever.

We may assume that such Philistines are few, especially in these days, when the stimulating force of a symphony orchestra has been proved beyond dispute. But the problem of paying for a first-class supply of this force has yet to be solved. Various methods have been tried in various countries, and in England there are even now several methods in operation, not one of which works with entire satisfaction. Some facts and figures, the details of which do not apply exactly to any particular orchestras, will give an idea of what it would cost to make the best of those orchestras as good as it could possibly be.

We speak of the musical profession as we might of the legal or medical professions, giving it a similar dignity, status and stability. But only in a few of its highest positions does it possess these qualities. Although the training of a first-class musician takes time and money, the rewards which he may hope to receive later are limited and uncertain. A successful soloist or conductor may achieve something comparable to the income of a doctor or lawyer, but orchestral players are left far behind, especially if they belong to a permanent orchestra which demands their full services and thus prevents them from profiting from well-paid but less artistic engagements outside.

It is normal to have three grades of fees or salary in a symphony orchestra: principal, sub-principal, and rank-and-file. The principals are the first wind-players and the leaders of each string section (the leader of the orchestra has a special fee, equal to about double the salary of a principal). The sub-principals are the second wind instruments and the other first-desk players, while the remainder of the strings fall into the "rank-and-file" category. There may be

one or two odd exceptions to this grading, but they do not upset the general rule. A weekly salary will vary between £10 and £16 as between the lowest and the highest grade; the limits may vary between one orchestra and another according to the conditions of work. Star players can often exploit the law of supply and demand in their favour, and place themselves on a higher financial level than their colleagues, but the virtue of this from the general orchestral point of view is extremely doubtful; in a permanent orchestra the standard of morale is important, and can only reach its highest point when all players feel that they all stand or fall together. This does not mean that I recommend a flat rate for everyone; the added stimulus of higher rank and payment still plays a large part in human endeavour, and it would be vain idealism to deny this.

At the rates mentioned above an orchestra of ninety players or so will cost not less than £1,200 a week in salaries alone, and if this were all that mattered it would not be difficult to make ends meet, but there are many more expenses to be considered. The conductors' fees will be more variable, not less than £6,000 a year, and usually a good deal more. Then, of course, a proportion of programmes will include works needing the co-operation of soloists, and although no set figure can be assessed, it is bound to reach several thousands a year. It will be seen from this that the cost of the musicians' services alone for a year will amount to about £80,000 for a permanent orchestra with an unchanging personnel, making no allowance for the demands of star players, but including a 10 per cent. addition to cover running costs, administration, etc.

These figures, however, mean nothing unless they are seen against a background of concert-giving, and unless the working conditions of the orchestral players are considered. Before concerts can be given, a number of other expenses have to be taken into account. Hire of halls, printing, all forms of publicity (for it is purposeless to give concerts unless everybody knows of them), fees for the local representative, railway travelling for orchestras which tour (and some touring will remain essential, even when each region has its own orchestra), hotel accommodation and a few less important items, will bring the sum total needed annually to well over the £100,000 mark. The running of a symphony orchestra has become big business.

This means that gross income must be in the neighbourhood of £2,000 each week. How is such a sum realised, if it *can* be realised? By a choice of two methods, or, rather, by a consideration of two methods, for an orchestra has no choice of its immediate circumstances. One orchestra may be subsidised by its municipality in cash, or in the free use of a hall, or both. Another, less fortunate, may have to earn 96 per cent. of its income from box-office receipts, and will be severely criticised for its efforts to ensure this by an occasional series of safe, popular programmes. It is important for us to think more about the latter type of orchestra, which is to be found in the capital of the British Empire; provincial orchestras are already treated with more generosity.

As musicians are no more capable of working every day of their lives than are other people, we can only allow for a maximum of six working days a week. I know that those who understand such things will start with alarm at such a prospect for an artistic organisation; but at the moment I am dealing only with economics—with how to keep a symphony orchestra out of the bankruptcy court. Even so, each concert will have to attract about £350 to the box office, and in the present state of concert-hall shortage in Great Britain, where available rooms are small, such a figure is almost beyond reach. Where it can be achieved at the present time, it is largely through restricted opportunities of spending money elsewhere, and cannot be regarded as a secure financial foundation on which to build our musical future. It means, also, that prices of admission are forced to a level which cannot be reached by young people and students—by those, in fact, on whom that future depends.

In a word, therefore, a symphony orchestra can be kept in being only if the public is overcharged, if the programmes are over-popular, and if the musicians are overworked and under-rehearsed; unless our governing bodies, national, county and municipal, come to recognise that the social service rendered by music is worthy of support, even at a cost to the community.

THOMAS RUSSELL

RADIO NOTES

Let the Children Sing. It is to be noticed that small children tend to yell at one another even when close together in a quiet spot, and undisturbed by excitement or anger. No doubt this is an unconscious result of the necessity they are under, at other times, of forcing adults to attend to them; but the result, in singing, is different. Concerted singing by children has a curiously moving, as it were Della Robbia effect: like blown candle-flames, the voices waver uncertainly, yet have the absorbed attentiveness of innocence bent upon some little personal task. But the unconscious effort of making themselves felt here translates itself into metric over-emphasis: every rhythm becomes a dance rhythm, with bumping accents. Before the seventeenth century secured rhythm in the strait-jacket of the bar-line and imposed equal temperament upon the notes of the scale, thus ousting the opalescent variety of the modes, I fancy all singing may have had approximately the same effect as that which we heard on August 30th; certainly children achieve quarter-tones without seeming merely to sing out of tune. What also struck me in this programme was the apparent preference of the children for short songs. In any case the broadcast was pretty, as well as interesting; but I could have wished to experience the added spontaneity of hearing the children themselves say what it was they liked and why—instead of being told these things by the cosy adult voice of Mr. Cedric Johnson. As it was I received the impression that the children had been told what to like—because those songs were in fact the ones they sang most effectively.

This business of announcing is a very ticklish one and announcers seem to me to vary as widely as actors. On the whole the usual objection to female announcers must be sustained, because—being women—they are so seldom able to exclude the personal note from their voices, and personality is just what we do not want obtruded, in this one case. Probably no such thing as a perfect announcer is possible, though to my mind Frederick Allen, and sometimes Christopher Pemberton, approach very near to the desideratum: they provide, without seeming to do so, the sense of occasion which radio intrinsically lacks; they turn down the lights for us, and raise the curtain, and make us feel that we are in the presence of something other than that disc of hideous rayon through which the sounds too often reach our ears.

Echo de Paris. This sketch of Oscar Wilde in the final period of his life had real quality—not only because it was written by Laurence Housman, but because Francis Sullivan managed brilliantly to convey the whole—or nearly the whole—of the man in his bitter, tragic, yet in some ways heroic, decay. The element of dignity emerged from the studiously concealed heart. Mr. Housman's jokes were often as funny as Wilde's own; but the long allegorical story (authentic Wilde) was complicated and boring. This was the only moment at which I thought the actor failed in an otherwise masterly effort of sustention. But did Robert Ross really speak like an elderly gillie? And surely the excellent narrator should have been rather more isolated from the actors? All the same, I congratulate the Drama Department on its courage, and Hugh Stewart on his adroitness, in putting this cunning and distinguished little play on the air.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*September 9th.* "New Records" (Desmond Shawe-Taylor on Verdi *Requiem*, 12.15); "Freya of the Isles" (4.45); "Ack-Ack" (Sir Frederick Pile, 9.15 p.m.).

September 11th. Denis Saurat on Paul Valéry (11.3 p.m.).

September 12th. Promenade Concert (Elizabeth Schumann, 7.10 p.m.).

September 13th. "Corner in Crime" (Crippen, 9.30 p.m.); John Clare (11.3 p.m.).

September 14th. "Jockey" (8.30 p.m.). "Henrietta Post" (Play from short story by Elizabeth Bowen, 10 p.m.); Forces Educational Broadcast (Modern Music, 10.40 a.m.) (L.P.).

September 15th. Orchestral Concert (2 p.m.); "The Round Table" (9.20 p.m.).

E. SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"The Southerner," at the London Pavilion
"Dead of Night," at the Gaumont
"Perfect Strangers," at the Empire
"One Against Seven," at the Tivoli *(from Sunday)*
"To the Shores of Iwo Jima," at the New Gallery

Three good films and two others that will pass: my lucky bag before I disappear on a fortnight's holiday. The new Renoir. One repeats as a truism that Hollywood is the grave of imported talent, and it's true in general. But against the decline of Clair, Flaherty, Duvivier, Lang, Stroheim, etc., we should remember the occasional stranger who at least manages not to lose ground. That is the case perhaps with Renoir. Cinema-goers have the opportunity of comparing his new film *The Southerner* with *La Grande Illusion*, still running at the Academy. What has been lost or gained during the eight years separating the two films? The theme of *The Southerner* is roughly that of *The Grapes of Wrath*, except that here the struggle is a more personal one against nature, defeatism and bad neighbours. The Poor White (Zachary Scott) prefers working his own cotton fields to a nomad life as a wage-earner. The land is rich, but he and his family have to exist in a tumbledown shack, without enough warmth or food. One of his children falls desperately ill; his few vegetables are destroyed by a neighbour's pigs. And when the first cotton crop comes up—all that he'd hoped—it is swept away in a night by rains. Despite everything, however, he begins again, and next year perhaps will see his efforts rewarded.

Renoir is concerned less with conditions than with human beings. The merits of *The Southerner* are in its vigorous realism, its feeling for landscape and people outside the arc-lights. Though not so memorable as the truck-load in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the Tuckers strike one as a genuine family, and the detail is everywhere fresh and surprising. Good performances by Zachary Scott, Betty Field, Beulah Bondi and others. I seemed to detect now and then a touch of that sentimental rounding-off which few American films altogether escape, but that is my only criticism of a film admirable in its kind. And how far does it fulfil one's hopes of the director of *La Grande Illusion?* Well, the promptings of a wild poetic insight seem to have died away a little, but so, too, have the theatrical situations that went with them. *The Southerner* is a broader and on the whole, I suppose, a more satisfying film.

With four directors, half a dozen authors, and a long starry cast, *Dead of Night* looks on paper like an expensive failure; but in fact it comes off agreeably. This is one of those collations of eerie stories to which a number of people gathered in a half-timbered cottage contribute their own experiences while the main story is working up to a climax. Both the whole and the parts thrill more than neatly, and several of the episodes explore the borderline between insanity and the supernatural. It is impossible to do justice to everyone at Ealing Studios who had a hand in the film, but my own preference goes to H. G. Wells's tall story about two golfers, one of whom came back to haunt the other and make him muff his stroke. It provides the *scherzo* at exactly the right moment in this ghostly suite.

The brothers Korda—Alexander and Zoltan—offer us a brace of slick, magazine stories which are entertaining if no more. *Perfect Strangers* is a sentimental comedy about a stuffy couple (Robert Donat and Deborah Kerr) who find war and a uniform a wonderful tonic and come back each expecting the other to be as dowdy as before. Lively, enjoyable, and profoundly untrue. Nice photography. In *One Against Seven* Paul Muni as a Russian commando finds himself trapped with seven German prisoners in a cellar. Rather portentously dramatic, but quite exciting for all that. It is really one and a half against seven, by the way, because there's a wounded girl commando, too.

The third good film—with *The Southerner* and *Dead of Night*—is an American documentary from the Pacific. *To the Shores of Iwo Jima* gives the ruthlessly vivid picture we expect now from such films, in this case the invasion and capture of a Jap island fortress. Four thousand men were lost in this battle for a tiny island, which was to provide an air base within bombing range of Tokyo.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Sigh No More," at the Piccadilly

Through all Noel Coward's writing there is the sense of something more permanent underlying the passions and tragedies and joys of our daily life; and that something, of course, is the West End theatre. "Sigh no more (sweet and beguiling ladies) . . . the winter's over . . . joy is your troubadour." Mr. Coward allows himself to be sophisticated in neither the lyrics nor the orchestration of his nostalgic numbers. But the tunes are most pretty, and our troubadour has arranged a delightful West End spring to cheer us. There are flaws. Right at the end, a cockney quartette, which should be screamingly funny, falls flat. An injudicious order of events prevents individual items from clinching each other by contrast. There are not enough *accelerandos* to point the many *rallentandos*. Mr. Graham Payn, an admirable white-tie dancer with a Queen's Hall voice, is made to be graceful once too often. Miss Grenfell appears one time too few. The *Blithe Spirit* ballet should be retained, for Richard Addinsell's music, and for Gladys Calthrop's decor, which effectively overcomes shortage of materials and labour everywhere except when she gives us a laborious backcloth of Windsor Castle (school of Brothers Harker) to stare at for ten minutes. But the best Coward is visible in the little scene with Madge Elliott as a Professional Companion in search of a companion. And there never was anyone who could sing a comic song with more point than Cyril Ritchard, nor one who could simultaneously entertain us on his own private level by parodying comic songs in general at the same time. And there never was anyone like Joyce Grenfell on *her* own particular level which is different from anyone else's because in her portraits there is no cynicism; nor is there satire, in the strict sense. Her observation seems to be made through the eyes not of criticism but of affection or even fellow-feeling, so that we positively like the Ensa singer whom (as she herself confesses) men seem to admire.

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to K. F. L.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The atomic energy latent in women, if released for construction, would save the world.—Report of a Methodist address in *Hornsey Journal*.

In mitigation of the offence it was pointed out by the defending lawyer that the accused, who had been educated at a public school, had been thrown on the world with no ability to earn a living and a certain weakness of character.—*Daily Worker*.

In some areas the R.A.F. has arranged educational visits to business houses.

One instance—a bomber crew was taken to an abattoir. The Labour Ministry is appealing for more slaughterers, and this was an attempt to interest the men in butchery.—*Evening News*.

Their owners set out on cycles in an effort to find a "pub" with plenty of supplies. If they are lucky they free a pigeon with a message to their pals, who take turns awaiting the bird's homecoming.—Daily paper.

In fairness to all, I must say that the bookmaker who has stayed at home has served his country, and his absent colleagues, well.—Letter in *Sporting Life*.

Correspondence

LABOUR POLICY

SIR,—In 1929 I believe that new and young Labour M.P.s, like I myself am now, were told to give the Labour Government a chance, to give them time. They were promised that, if they did, more resolute action would follow when they had settled down. The result was that the Labour Government devoted its energies to placating the opposition and to carrying out essentially Conservative policies. At the following election the people understandably voted for the Conservatives because if they were to have Conservatism, anyway, it might as well be carried out by the Party that believed in it.

I don't want it to be thought that I am trying to embarrass the Government, but it seems to me that we are already in danger of the same thing happening again. The Labour Ministers appear to be interpreting the wish of the people at the election as a wish for a kind of alternative Coalition Government—although a more progressive one, perhaps, and one that leaves out the bad old Tories. In my view, that was not the wish of the electorate. The mandate given to us by the people was for a strong Left-Wing Policy. They were not interested in personalities; otherwise they would have voted for Mr. Churchill. They were voting for "our Government," as I have heard said to me so many times.

They expected from "our Government" decisive action in many spheres. That desire could have been met by imagination and by showing that official red tape was not going to be allowed to stand in the way.

During the election there *was* a lot of talk, whatever Labour Ministers may say now, about forming an overall Ministry of Housing with full powers to push on the housing drive. It may be quite true that it has now been found that legislative difficulties mean that the creation of such a Ministry would actually delay the building programme and not quicken it. That should be explained to the people fully and often.

There is strong feeling in the country that Old Age Pensioners have been suffering from a long-standing injustice. We know that this problem will be dealt with eventually in the Social Security Schemes. But here was a chance to announce an immediate rise in the Old Age Pensions plus the abolition of the Means Test. There would have been no opposition, and the increased benefits could have been incorporated into the Social Security Schemes later. Every month of increased income counts tremendously to those who have not much longer to live. The response to such concrete action would have been terrific and would have been taken as an immediate earnest of good faith.

Everywhere to everyone's knowledge there is extreme shortage of labour, particularly in the building trade. Similarly, there is an almost violent desire from all ranks to get out of the Services immediately. "Our Government" will see to that all right, they thought. Mr. Attlee's emendation of Mr. Isaac's unsatisfactory statement does not dispel the fear that permanent Civil Servants, on the plea for a tidy scheme, are still being permitted to dictate policy. What does it matter if the scheme does get a bit untidy? The present need for labour is so acute that any temporary surplus would soon be absorbed; and because releases under Class B must not overtake those under Class A many key workers are still unavailingly trying to get out of the Services into industries where they are urgently needed and on the success of which the Government's other plans depend.

These are only a few of the fields—I will not add my comments to Mr. Bevin's Foreign Policy Speech—in which the Government is disappointing its supporters. Visits to my constituency and my daily letters, particularly from soldiers, have convinced me that the disappointment is considerable. My hope is that people are not yet reading Hansard and comparing the answers given by Labour Ministers with those of the previous Tory Ministers on the same subjects.

What the Labour Ministers must realise is that at present the country is much to the Left of them. The country is ready for drastic measures and expects imagination and boldness. If reforms needed cannot be effected at once, the reasons must be given in detail. The people want to know the whys and wherefores. If they know, they will respond. The enthusiasm must be canalised while it is there and before it is too late. What is the use of having an orderly revolution if it turns out not to be a revolution at all?

17, Chatsworth Court, London, W.8. WOODROW WYATT

DEMOBILISATION

SIR,—I think that you will be interested to hear of a typical example of the causes for the present unrest in the British Army. Of the total strength of the unit at which I am stationed, it would be a conservative estimate to say that at least 200 men do little or nothing during the day, other than attempt to look busy.

However, in spite of this superfluity of labour, a new parade has been instigated for all personnel at 6.15 a.m., nominally as a "check parade." Up to date no roll has been called on this parade, which has been purely devoted to picking up waste paper before breakfast, a job which four men could easily do at some other time of day.

With such cases constantly before their eyes, is it to be wondered at that the men greet with scorn and dismay the over-exaggerated estimates of men essentially required in the Services? SIGNALLER

[We print this letter as typical of many received.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

NEWSPAPERS IN BRITISH ZONE

SIR—Allow me to draw your attention to the results of introducing British newspaper methods into the shattered social structure of occupied Germany. There are three papers published by German editors in the British zone (Aachen, Cologne, Essen). All these papers will have a monopoly position so long as only one paper is allowed. This monopoly position can very easily be misused.

If Aachen is to be regarded as the prototype, it seems that British policy is to encourage Germans to publish on a *Daily Express-Daily Sketch* line or, in German terms, as *Generalanzeiger*. The recent elections in this country are a proof of the fact that the *Generalanzeiger* type is unable to form basic creeds. Only the type of paper or, especially, periodical with political, social or strong religious allegiances (*Gesinnungspresse*, in German terms) are useful in political re-education.

The only alternative to the *Generalanzeiger* press is the *Gesinnungspresse* as represented in this country by the *Daily Herald*, *News-Chronicle* and the *Yorkshire Post*. Every precaution should be taken not to prejudice the publication of *Gesinnungszeitungen* at the given time. However, this is just what is done, unintentionally, at present. According to German standards the circulation of the present papers is so extraordinarily high and the salary paid to the managers and editors so extravagant that any other paper will need an unreasonably large capital to start competition on the market.

No time should be lost in licensing serious periodicals. Nearly all trade union papers in pre-Hitler Germany belonged to this type of which the *Weltbuehne*, the *Tagebuch*, the *Welt am Montag* are the best known. It was this type of periodical which proved to be an efficient instrument of political information and group-forming. At present, it is forbidden.

Paper could be provided for a minimum of these weeklies and fortnightlies by cutting down the large circulation of the officially sponsored newspapers. So far as trade unions are concerned a regional trade union paper would be only a fair compensation for the compulsory reading of a *Daily Express*.

The editors of these periodicals would, of course, have to be checked most carefully, but after they have passed the test they should not be submitted to the famous *Vorzensur*. They can be jailed afterwards anyway.

One Socialist released from a concentration camp has already refused to take editorial responsibility under present conditions. It would have grave consequences if active democrats were compelled to assume this attitude, so that political penny-a-liners

would queue for editorial positions. If that happens, the press in Germany could not become an instrument of political and moral regeneration.

TRADE UNIONIST

SUDETEN-GERMANS

SIR,—Herr Jaksch must indeed consider his case very weak one to find it necessary to resort to a campaign of *Gräuel Propaganda* and such gross exaggerations as his statement that "almost everyone in the Sudetenland suspected of an active share in the Nazi movement is already imprisoned, slain or burned." The facts are—I am inclined to say unfortunately—a little different.

Allow me to state the case as it appears to one who is acquainted with the other side.

1. It is undeniable that after the experiences of the recent past, the Czechoslovaks came to the firm and unanimous conclusion that the existence of their State and their freedom is not secure so long as there remains in the country a large and potentially disloyal alien minority which, in every crisis of the nation's history, has adopted the rôle of fifth column. The programme of expulsion of the guilty and of transfer of the potentially dangerous is not the invention of any Government or group, but the result of a popular will of such intensity and unanimity that no Government would dare to oppose it without risking not only overthrow, but a popular upheaval. The whole people, including even the most moderate, accept it, mostly with regret, as a painful but unavoidable necessity.

2. The Czechoslovak Government—in London as well as in Prague—has repeatedly declared its sincere intention and desire (which we all share with you) to see the transfer carried out in an organised, humane and orderly manner, and will, no doubt, even accept international supervision if it is assured that such supervision will not be turned into another Runcimanade.

3. It is equally undeniable that in its first stages the process of carrying out this programme got slightly out of hand: you can hardly expect a local committee of men who had spent six years of their life in Buchenwald or Dachau to be very gentle with the people whom they consider guilty of all the misery and suffering caused to them and their families and friends. Yet it would be hardly fair to blame the Central Government for the deficiencies of administration which the Germans—with the help of many so-called Sudeten Germans—destroyed and which, therefore, has to rely on makeshift popular local committees. Even so, however, there is a remarkable absence of cruelty or bloodshed, the desire for vengeance mostly taking the form of imposing upon the Germans the laws and regulations previously imposed by them upon the Jews, and of trying to rid the country of them as soon as possible. It is not true to say, as Mr. Jaksch implies, that the expulsions are indiscriminate: there are thousands of loyal "good" Germans, certified by local German anti-Fascist committees, going about free and unmolested and allowed to remain in the country if they desire.

4. As central authority gets stronger and administration organised even in the outlying districts most affected, the Government is able to check excessive local zeal and, as President Beneš put it in his interview with the B.B.C. correspondent R. L. Miall, "to canalise the revolution—or the present evolution, whichever you will—in order to proceed to the measures desired by the people in a reasonable way, and in order to do it without violence."

5. Last, but not least: any foreign journalist is free and welcome to come and see, and check on the spot whether Herr Jaksch's *Gräuel Propaganda* or my statement on the situation corresponds to the truth. There are no restrictions upon the entry or movement of foreign correspondents in Czechoslovakia, and there is no censorship of the reports they send to their papers abroad. The only risk they run is that of displeasing Herr Jaksch if what they see and report does not bear out his presentation of the case.

JAROSLAV CISAR

THE W.E.A.

SIR,—Joad is usually so logical and clear that one reads with disappointment his strangely pessimistic approach to Adult Education in his article under the title *The Tide of Opportunity*. On this occasion he has allowed the tide to overwhelm him. The figures of W.E.A. student membership on which he bases his case are fantastically wrong. He says the W.E.A. student membership of classes "has increased by only 20,000 since the first Great War." The actual figures are:—

	Classes.	Students.
1918	152	3,799
1944	4,418	80,730

This does not take into account the many more thousands for whom the W.E.A. provides public lectures, week-end and one-day schools, discussion groups and other informal activities. However, I am not worried much about numbers.

Of course, we all desire to see a much larger number taking advantage of continued education, but Joad can rest assured that no one will be asked "to cope with the problem presented by the continued education of several million men and women who will presumably in the future be demobilised."

We shall have to cope with those whose interest has been aroused—a relatively small proportion in comparison with the "several million" and we shall have to seek to stimulate the interest of as many more as possible.

No one can yet estimate what the size of the problem will be, but the larger it is, the more dangerous would be the implication in Joad's article that it will have to be undertaken by some State or semi-State mechanism. This theory is being rather widely advocated by others less versed in the basic principles of independence and freedom for Adult Education than Dr. Joad himself. Of course, the State has a responsibility and definite functions in Adult Education as in every other department of education, and through C.E.M.A. it has performed that function admirably in Art and Music. When, however, one considers the problem in relation to the burning controversial issues on political and economic questions in which the W.E.A. is primarily concerned, then a State department should remain above the battle.

If the voluntary organisations, Universities and the L.E.A.'s cannot supply the needs of those vast hordes whom Dr. Joad estimates will be clamouring for Adult Education, the reason for their failure to do so will be due to no other factor than financial stringency, and it is here where the State can make its most effective contribution.

Some of us, with a fairly long experience in Adult Education, believe that a State or semi-State "national supply service on the lines of A.B.C.A. to provide literature, lectures, etc." would be a doubtful and dangerous exchange for a democratic and independent voluntary movement, and that it is pregnant with many potentially totalitarian possibilities. In this one does not rule out the need for more assistance from the State to bodies making the provision.

Fortunately, there has never been any disposition on the part of the Ministry of Education in this country to turn itself into a Ministry of Instruction, and the healthy state of Adult Education in this country as compared with others, has been the unique co-operation between the Ministry, Statutory bodies, Universities and the Voluntary movements.

I am quite sure that Joad, whose association with the W.E.A. goes back so many years and to whom we owe so much for his constant reiteration of the need for priority in Adult Education will, on reflection, recognise that his enthusiasm on this occasion may be misunderstood.

ERNEST GREEN,
General Secretary, W.E.A.

[C. E. M. Joad writes: "I am sorry that I got my figures of membership wrong. The figures of membership I had meant to quote, but omitted from

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JONATHAN CAPE

lack of space, were those given in the W.E.A.'s report *Adult Education After the War*, namely, 54,000 in 1938-39 and 1939-40; 23 600 in 1922-23, so that my figure of 20,000 increase should have been 30,000. In 1943-44 the numbers had, as Mr. Green says, risen to nearly 81,000. But I cannot see that this modification much affects the argument which was that no voluntary body is big enough for the job. It is Mr. Green himself who tells us in his *Education for a New Society* that the "W.E.A. and University classes represented" (before the war) "only 60,000 students out of a total of nearly 1,250,000."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SPANISH REPUBLICANS IN FRANCE

SIR,—We desire to appeal on behalf of a large body of men, women and children, who stand in urgent need of help. These are the remnant, about 100,000, of the Spaniards who took refuge in France rather than accept Fascism in Spain.

They were the first in Europe to resist Fascism and now, when most of Europe is free, they still find themselves exiles in a foreign land. Some of them work on the land and are able to maintain their families, but there are others whose position is indeed pitiable. Many of them fought with the Maquis. On the dispersal of the guerilla formations, pay and family allowances ceased, and there is no work for them owing to the disorganisation of French economic life. There are 1,250 such men in the Department Pyrenees Orientales alone.

Particularly distressing is the position of those returning from forced labour gangs or concentration camps. Many were brutally treated in Belsen, Buchenwald, and also at Mathausen, where of about 10,000 imprisoned Spaniards only about 1,600 survived. Relief workers in France report that when these men arrive back they receive the French Government grant to repatriated deportees of 1,000 francs (worth in purchasing power about 35s.), but after this one payment nothing more is officially done for them, and they seem quite friendless and astray.

Little imagination is needed to visualise the position of prisoners returning to a foreign land, homeless, workless, and with health undermined by eight years of privation and persecution.

Work for these Spaniards on a limited scale is being done by Quaker Relief workers in Peripignan, Toulouse, Montauban and Marseilles. One of these reports that the Spaniards are in danger of becoming a neglected group as there are no special funds for them in France and little interest. The Quaker organisation could do much more if funds were available, and as they have the necessary machinery, personnel, experience and facilities for transport of supplies, we propose to pass any monies collected to them. But as our Committee was the first to take up the question of relief for Republican Spaniards—in Spain, in France and in this country, we feel a special responsibility. We appeal confidently for the help of those who share our convictions that these earliest fighters against Fascism, who have suffered so long and so greatly, should not be abandoned to destitution and despair. Donations of whatever amount will be gratefully received.

DUCHESS OF ATHOLL (*President*).
ELEANOR RATHBONE, M.P. (*Chairman*).
LADY LAYTON (*Hon. Sec.*).
THE EARL OF LISTOWEL (*Vice-Chairman*).
WILFRID ROBERTS, M.P. (*Hon. Sec.*).
Joint Committee for Spanish Republican Aid,
39, Victoria Street,
London, S.W.1.

H. G. WELLS

SIR,—While, alas, he lies ill in bed, H. G. Wells could, were he a complacent man, look back over his many years and congratulate himself on a success that few men have ever lived to enjoy.

The odd visions (for such they then seemed) with which he enchanted his early readers have now become the realities of our day, and the then small cause of Socialism which he championed so energetically is now the governing power in the State.

I wonder, indeed, and doubt, if that cause would be where it is to-day, if indeed all Europe would have swung Left, if this remarkable old gentleman had never lived. No man of his generation, not excepting Shaw, had so marked an effect on the growing minds in this century's earlier years as H.G. He taught the need for Socialism and the wisdom of it in palatable and easily digested form, and its triumph in Britain to-day is perhaps his more than it is that of any other single living man.

He has produced his own monument, and nothing that anyone can now do will diminish its splendour or its permanence; but some of us would like future generations to know that even his contemporaries were grateful to him as those who come after us will also be grateful.

I would suggest that those who wish to show that a prophet, for once, shall not be without honour both in his own country and his lifetime might subscribe to a fund to endow a scholarship of his choosing with his name, or some other form of human enterprise, as he may wish.

There must be hundreds of thousands of men and women in this country alone who feel themselves in his debt, and who would be glad to contribute, however small a sum, to such an object.

ONE OF THEM

INDIAN PRISONS

SIR,—On September 2nd, the whole of India must have rejoiced at the news that at last the penal settlement in the Andamans is to be abolished. The "Green Hell" at the swampy centre of the islands and the Cellular Jail at Port Blair which has been called a "living inferno" will thus be horrors of the past. On this occasion, I as an Indian must publicly thank THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for its valuable assistance in the matter.

There still remains, however, the question of intolerable conditions in Indian prisons. May we hope that the spirit of reform which has moved the Government of India to abolish the Penal Settlement will not now be renounced? D. M. SEN

[Reference is made to this correspondence and the India Office reply in our Comments this week.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

COMMUNITY SERVICE

SIR,—The comradeship of the Forces is one of the few good things that grew out of the conditions of war, and it will be one of the first to be missed by Service people coming back into civil life. Many returning men and women feel unfamiliar and unfriended in the relatively impersonal society to which the civilian becomes conditioned by use. If they too become conditioned to it, something of real value to them and to us all will have been lost and may not be easily recovered.

Some now returning from the Forces will wish to see whether life at home may not be lived on the same generous terms of co-operation, sharing and mutual service. To all such who will wish to make contact with others like-minded and to benefit by their practical experience, the Community Post-War Advisory Group offers its assistance freely. It is a voluntary, non-political and non-sectarian body at the service of all men and women who have served in any capacity during the war, at home or abroad, and who wish to explore the possibilities of continuing association in work or in leisure activities. Inquiries should be sent to Hon. Sec., Chancton, Dartnell Park, West Byfleet, Surrey.

GEORGE F. MACLEOD
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BASIL BLACKWELL

BOOKS IN GENERAL

In wartime there are fewer criminal trials, fewer still that people will bother to read and gossip about, but when the famous case (outside of war and politics) does come along, it is likely to assume extravagant dimensions. Such, towards the end of the last war, was the Pemberton-Billing case. It went on and on for days, beginning with simple libel and snowballing here and there till in the end there was hardly a corner of our native lunacy left unexplored. The indecency of dancing without stockings, Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, Sunday play societies, homosexuality, and spy mania converged gloriously to produce a black list of 10,000 traitors who, by means of their sexual peculiarity, were supposed to have been led on to betray their country. A climax was reached when the names of the Prime Minister and of the judge trying the case (Mr. Justice Darling) were found to be high up on the list; which, according to Mr. Arnold Bennett, was nothing more compromising than a list of prospective English customers for the Mercedes car company. The whole affair was a display of Philistinism gone mad. It remains one of the most disgraceful and fantastically revealing trials in recent history, and might well be reprinted among the Famous Trials, several of which, incidentally, have been hardly worth remembering.

Beside it, the cases of the Talking Mongoose and of Mrs. Helen Duncan may seem a comparatively pale reflection of our own years. The atmosphere this time is one, not of vindictive and loopy prejudice, but of open superstition. Mrs. Duncan, a well-known medium, was charged under the Witchcraft Act of 1735—the creaking machinery of the law seems here appropriate—with pretending to exercise or use a kind of "witchcraft, sorcery, inchantment or conjuration." Whatever the nature of her past performances, there could be little doubt that on the evening when the police intruded, Mrs. Duncan's spirits were stage-managed: earlier photographs reveal what seem to be cheese-cloth, a safety-pin, a coat-hanger, a head cut out of a magazine. She had been convicted before of conjuring with stockingette. On this occasion her fees during the ten days of her appearance in Portsmouth had amounted to £112. She preferred not to give evidence and was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

In court the evidence for the prosecution was brutal and to the point; three at least of the supposed spirits represented non-existent uncles, aunts and sisters; in the light of a 4-watt red lamp at the other end of the room almost anything could and did happen; not only loving relatives, but a bearded compère named Albert and a parrot made their appearance; a materialised sailor observed tartly to a lieutenant in the audience that there were no ranks in the other world; a lady who had been afflicted with bowel trouble when she deceased twenty years earlier was introduced as still suffering from the same complaint; the most embarrassing visitant, perhaps, was the twenty-year-old youth without a face—survival, it seemed, of a miscarriage; there were bits of nursery rhyme and some singing in Welsh, Chinese "guide" with a swinging pig-tail and moustache eighteen inches long, reassurances about "passing over," voices that said the expected remote thing (though one of them came out with a surprising aside about "bloody twisters"); and the curtains of Mrs. Duncan's cabinet kept opening and shutting, animated by one knows not what tireless legerdemain . . . The only evidence, in fact, the prosecution failed to obtain was the regurgitated cheese-cloth (if that was indeed the nature of the material); it slipped through the policeman's fingers in the direction of the audience. "It had to go," as Mrs. Duncan so nicely put it, "somewhere."

The reader of *The Trial of Mrs. Duncan* may be left wondering whether there is any limit to human credulity. As the witnesses file into the box during six days of cross-examination, the division grows wider between sheep and goats, the faithful and the sceptical. Here, for the prosecution, is the goat's view:

> *Q.* What happened after "Loch Lomond" had been rendered? Did the form retire? *A.* Yes, sir. She said in broad Scots, "I'm gaun doon noo," and went back into the curtains; and then we heard the guide's voice speaking again.
>
> *Q.* Did Peggy or Albert reappear? *A.* We heard Albert's voice speaking, and it said that someone had put their foot upon an animal at some time or other, and Mrs Homer said, "Do you mean in a friendly way or otherwise?" and the guide's voice said that it was definitely friendly, and a woman's voice said, "Well, I once put a cat out of misery by holding it in a bath of water with my foot because it had been run over," and Albert's voice said, "That's the voice, and here is the cat."
>
> *Q.* Were you looking? *A.* Yes.
>
> *Q.* What happened? *A.* Something meeowed behind the curtains.
>
> *Q.* Like a cat? *A.* Yes, and a faint object was pushed through, and a voice said, "Here is the cat." I could not say whether it was a cat or not.

Contrast with that the tone of the following reply, typical of a dozen or more witnesses for the defence who were satisfied that through the mediumship of Mrs. Duncan they had "got results":

> . . . In May, when my daughter came for the first time, I forgot to mention that I was very disappointed because the time was just up, and I was very disappointed that I did not see my husband. I went with the express hope that he could come, and when Albert said that the power was nearly finishing, I cried out: I said, "Oh, Mrs. Homer, isn't my husband coming?" and Albert heard me and said that he respected the medium and that she could not go on indefinitely, but he would do what he could, and so he brought Mrs. Duncan to the opening of the curtains, and my husband built up, just head and shoulders; it was Mrs. Duncan's body below, but just the head and shoulders of my husband.
>
> *Q.* That is very interesting. *A.* And he bowed to me and said, "I will come again." That to me seemed very evident . . . .

I happened to be in court for an hour or so one afternoon when this kind of interrogation was going on. The persons in the witness-box, who described the re-encounter with dead husbands and wives—some having even kissed them or touched their hands—were for the most part unquestioning, humdrum and depressed. There could be no question of their truthfulness; such squalid intimacies, one felt, required the dim red light in which they originated. Religion surely has never before sunk to more dismal or meaningless depths. For beyond the dubious contact there was simply nothing. No harm done, and a little comfort? One's attention wandered to the enormous purple-cheeked woman in the dock, who, whatever else her attainments, has always got away with one trick up her sleeve. In this case the ectoplasmic cheese-cloth which disappeared, spiritualistically speaking, in the wrong direction, but still disappeared. An interesting account of Mrs. Duncan, restricted by the impending appeal, was published after the trial in *Horizon* (June, 1944). Mr. Denys Parsons, a spiritualist, gives a damning account of the attempt to submit Mrs. Duncan to scientific tests but mentions also evidence that would seem to disprove the regurgitation theory, favoured by Price and other investigators. Perhaps, as Mr. Bechhofer Roberts suggests in his introduction to the *Trial*, the cloth was merely slipped to Mrs. Duncan by an associate when the séance opened and snatched back again when the police jumped up to intervene. Unaccountably, having lost their most tangible piece of evidence, the police refrained from searching everyone in the room, as they were invited to. A report on Mrs. Duncan's pretensions as a medium will be found by curious readers in the works of Harry Price.

The effect on a medium of public exposure is not what one might suppose: it brings a larger following and an increase of faith. Every materialisation medium, we are told, except D. D. Home, has been convicted at one time or another of trickery. The art of the conjurer is indeed so interwound with that of the medium that Conan Doyle, for example, when confronted with Houdini, replied that he must be the best medium in the world without knowing it. The average spiritualist would seem to be boundlessly credulous, while the medium's whole outlook and character are tinged with natural cunning. Even well-attested mediums, such as Rudi Schneider or Eusapia Palladino, cheated when they had the opportunity, often in a state of trance. To the non-spiritualist reader Mr. Hannen Swaffer's *My Greatest Story* will be a fascinating addition to the annals of credulity. He will *prove*, he says, that death isn't an end—without of course offering proof of anything. Mrs. Duncan is described as "our best materialisation medium" and that assertion in itself makes her trial (at which Mr. Swaffer was one of the defence witnesses) an occasion for martyrdom. The atmosphere—to me highly enjoyable—of these spooky recollections can be conveyed in a paragraph or two:

> Dogs materialised and wagged their tails against the legs of chairs; a cat scratched at the carpet; and a bird which the medium had that morning found injured in the road outside, nursed until it "died" and then buried in the garden covered with rose leaves, flew about the room.
>
> Always I felt on my head and stroking my hair the materialised hand of my sister-in-law.
>
> Sometimes an enormous Red Indian guide would clasp our ankles . . .

And Mr. Swaffer assures us that the late Annie Ahlers regularly and successfully instructs Miss Evelyn Laye in "*abandon*"—a curious preoccupation for the other world. He believes that we can be saved by an alliance of Socialism and Spiritualism.

It is rather shameful to tag on, at the end of an article, a paragraph on Mr. Harry Price's immense and immensely entertaining *Poltergeist Over England*. I don't know how many cases it records but they must run into hundreds. Of all supernormal manifestations the Poltergeist is perhaps the best attested; its habits seem to have changed very little down the centuries, and according to Mr. Price manifestations are commoner to-day than ever before. These pranks vary from object-throwing that might be the work of invisible small boys to hauntings of a more elaborate nature with, occasionally, a touch of wistfulness. The Rev. Samuel Wesley was pushed and pulled by Poltergeists; they have made the top storey of the Eiffel Tower their playground; they have started fires, written messages on walls, driven people insane; and the most curious of them, if not the most credible, left a single animal-like track in the snow that went in a bee-line over houses and tree-tops. Where Mr. Price's book differs from others on the subject is in its mixture of legendary gusto and scientific test. Many recent cases of Poltergeists have been ingeniously explored by Mr. Price, among others the fraudulent Mongoose and Borley Rectory, whose mysterious commotions for more than a century have shocked and delighted hundreds of people of all kinds. Mr. Price was himself a tenant of Borley Rectory, which, though burnt out, remains vigorously haunted. How are these rumpuses, which show at times a low level of intelligence, to be explained? There seems to be an obscure connection with sexual disturbance, usually in a female child at the onset of puberty; temperature changes may have something to do with the actual moving of objects. But the records, often wonderfully detailed, still lack any scientific explanation. Meanwhile in Mr. Price we have an investigator for whom no Poltergeist ever knocked or shied a stone or tumbled downstairs in vain.

G. W. Stonier

The Trial of Mrs. Duncan. Edited with a Foreword by C. E. Bechhofer Roberts. With a Note on the Old Bailey, by Helena Normanton. *Jarrolds.* 21s. 6d.

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COLLEGE TUTOR

Fifty-Five Years at Oxford. G. B. GRUNDY. *Methuen.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Exposures of the Public School System can always reckon on a good sale—and a wide measure of credence. Like commercial broadcasting, the Old School Tie is now a recognised subject of ridicule, even among those who wear it. The joke has become so popular that it obscures reality. Meanwhile, an institution, which has resolutely refused to adapt itself to modern needs, gets off scot free. No one exposes "the College System" at Oxford and Cambridge, either in the autobiographical novel or on the music halls. Its oddities are accepted as the eccentricities of learning, its inadequacies as old-world culture. We remember the beauty, the excitement and the sense of liberation; we seldom ask ourselves whether our teachers were really learned or their research of the highest quality. College life for most of us meant undergraduate life.

This is natural enough for the scientist whose work is done in the University Lab. For him the college is merely the place where he lives, his social life—like his house at school. But for anyone who read history or philosophy the college was a great deal more. On the quality of the senior common room depended the quality of his university education. The Faculty might be brilliant; but it was to his college tutors that he must go for the tutorials which formed the basis of the teaching.

I recommend Dr. Grundy's autobiography to anyone who would reflect on the teaching of "the humanities" at Oxford. It is full of fascinating stories, for instance this of Walter Pater:

> One Sunday night a number of those dining in college left the Common Room very early. Pater asked me why they had gone. I said that I expected that they had gone to hear Canon Gore (afterwards Bishop of Oxford), who was addressing the undergraduates in the large lecture-room on the subject of the Trinity. Pater expressed a wish to hear what he had to say, and we went to hear him. We got seats just inside the door. I noticed that Gore, who was drawing near the end of his address, saw Pater come in, and showed by his expression of face that he would rather he had not come to hear him. We only heard the end of the address. At the conclusion Gore said that if anyone wanted to ask any question on what he had said he would, if he could, answer him. Gore ought to have known better than give such an invitation to a body of undergraduates who had listened to an address on such a subject. After two minutes of profound silence a little undergraduate got up. He asked, quite innocently, I am sure, a question which was so blasphemous that I shall not repeat it here. Pater turned to me and said, "I am going." And we went out together. He was intensely shocked, and never said a word as we walked across to his rooms. Nor did he ever refer to the incident later.

Reading Dr. Grundy's reminiscences I was transferred, vividly and violently, to my life both as an undergraduate studying "Greats" and later as a tutor. Once again I was a member of that strange community, not a university in the ordinary sense of the word, but a congery of autonomous colleges held together by contiguity and by a single examination system. For at Oxford—so far as the humane studies go—each senior common room is a law unto itself. Each college has its own endowments and elects and pays its own Fellows and tutors according to the taste of the governing body, which itself consists of the Fellows. It fixes its own salaries; it teaches what it likes, how it likes; it even selects its own undergraduates by its own entrance examination. A senior common room, in fact, is a society which perpetuates itself by re-election—usually until voluntary retirement or preferment sometimes. Sometimes it is very good indeed; it has a flavour of Mr. Perrin and Mr. Trail.

Dr. Grundy is a passionate champion of this system or lack of system. He believes that the university faculty should remain at the mercy of the colleges. The faculty of *Litterae Humaniores*, for instance, to which he belonged, cannot select its staff according to the University's requirements either for research or teaching. Apart from a few university professors and lecturers, it must accept whomever the college may choose to elect as Fellows and tutors. The colleges are sovereign, and their relations to the university are those of the governments of the Great Powers to the Security Council of the United Nations. Jealous of college rights, Dr. Grundy fought for fifty-five years against the university centralisers, and in particular against the tyrannous aggression of the Hebdominal Council. Early in his career at Corpus he helped to defeat a plot to elect as Warden Arthur Sedgwick, a distinguished scholar, but, alas, a Liberal, in national and university politics. Grundy's nominee, Thomas Case, was appointed, and ruled Corpus for twenty years. This is how Dr. Grundy describes him:

> On university matters he was a rigid Conservative all along the line; a determined opponent of the abolition of compulsory Greek and of the admission of women to the University and of what he considered the exaggerated claims of science. He read hardly any modern literature, except *The Times* and the *Daily Herald*, the latter with a view to keeping *au fait* with the evil doings of the Labour Party. When I was made College Librarian, he advised me to buy no new books for the Library. He said that he had been the College Librarian for many years and had never added a single book to the Library during his tenure of office.

Another remarkable example of corporate college wisdom in the selection of fellows was Cuthbert Shields:

> He was a mystic. His real name was Robert Laing, but he had abandoned that for one which signified that he regarded himself as under the protection of St. Cuthbert of Durham. . . . He was a firm believer in the reincarnation of those who had lived in the past. Save for these fantasies he was sane during the years that I knew him. . . One morning I was breakfasting in the Common Room when the door was opened, and almost immediately I found that someone behind me was holding a walking stick under my nose. The stick had a glass ball at the top of it through which could be seen the coloured picture of a woman such as you might have expected to find in the valentines of former times. Then came Shield's voice saying: "Of course you know who that is." I confessed that I did not know but, in order to be conciliatory, asked who she was, and was told that it was Queen Elizabeth, and that she was a reincarnation of Joan of Arc.

Apparently Cuthbert Shields remained tutor in modern history for many years.

Fifty-five years at Oxford gives a lively picture, not of a typical college tutor—Dr. Grundy's remarkable achievement in educating himself after leaving school at 14½ is not typical of Oxford—but of a representative "character." He has an acute mind, sharpened by the trivial and esoteric polemics of Common Room and Convocation. Of these he writes with a gleeful and pedantic spleen which makes politics seem a gentlemanly pursuit. He is learned in the sense that he has learnt a lot. His taste may be estimated by his remark:

> I have always thought that English prose attained its greatest heights in the works of Gibbon and later in the writings of Froude, Tom Hughes and Charles Kingsley.

Of his style the following is not untypical:

> I will briefly describe the district, for it was not one such as could be realised by a dweller in the South of England and was perhaps without parallel even in the industrial North.

In his fifty-five years Dr. Grundy has certainly exacerbated the wits of many future administrators, lawyers, and journalists. But should he and others like him still be permitted to obstruct those university reforms without which a revival of the humane studies at Oxford is quite impossible?

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

Ill Fares the Land. By C. MCWILLIAMS. With an introduction by the Earl of Portsmouth. *Faber and Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Regrets have been expressed, sometimes by those who should know better, that "the City" does not take a more active interest in agriculture, with joint stock companies to earn profits for shareholders under high-pressure management. Others, with a misguided enthusiasm for agricultural "technology," confuse the efficiency of the counting house with the efficiency necessary to win Nature's co-operation in providing man with food, and visualise a millennium when the farms of Britain are lumped together and handed over to the mercies of wooden-headed engineers and black-coated agronomes to drive on battalions of wage-earners recruited from dispossessed farmers.

To this generation, debauched already by so much of that sort of thing in other branches of industry, it may sound attractive enough. They should read this book by Mr. McWilliams, which is a factual account of the terrible toll of human misery that has overtaken a large slice of the U.S.A. through allowing the joint stock company and the agricultural technician a free hand to exploit the land. *Ill Fares the Land* gives chapter and verse for John Steinbeck's great novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. It shows that Steinbeck did no more than dramatise the truth without exaggerating it. He could hardly have exaggerated it if he had tried. How *can* one exaggerate such a catastrophe as 350,000 men, uprooted from their farms and homes where the very soil had been destroyed, and projected, a lost army of migrants, into a single State, with no hope, no means of existence, possessing on an average about £20 per head including the value of their clothes and the ramshackle cars in which they had arrived? They were driven into press gangs of casual farm labour by the interests that were exploiting them; they were even driven, like beasts, into stockades where they were kept prisoner, without any charge against them, for a winter. And that was only in one State. Mr. McWilliams has similar tragedies to disclose in California, Arizona, Oklahoma, Colorado, Indiana, Ohio and Texas. In fact, according to him, half the farm population of America has been cut loose from its roots and turned adrift by the supreme benefits of high-pressure capitalism and mechanisation run mad.

What happens when big business gets busy on the land was revealed in the evidence obtained by the La Follette Committee in California. A typical "farm factory" is the Earl Fruit Company, owned by a holding Company, the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation. It operates as one unit 27 farm properties in California, leases 11 others, and owns land in other States. It owns also wineries, a lumber and box company and the Baltimore Fruit Exchange, as well as important holdings in fruit auction houses in Chicago, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. This, of course, is only one of many such enterprises. It is obvious that the processing and distributive aspects in such an enterprise come to dominate the purely productive aspects. Gone is the peasant's care for the soil and for good husbandry, or his desire to build up the fertility of his farm to hand it on in better heart for his children. All that matters is the cash profit, and if "it pays" to work the land out over a few years and leave behind a dust-bowl before turning to fresh land to destroy . . . well, wouldn't that be the wish of the shareholders? The canneries have an important hand in this, and rather than bargain with these powerful associations of growers, they encourage the growers to slash labour costs, and so "help" the growers to organise against agricultural workers. Behind the canneries stand the can-makers, of which there are only four important manufacturers in the United States. They also want to finance a labour front for the canneries. For

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in 1929, out of every dollar spent by the consumer on canned tomatoes, 24 cents represented the cost of the can to the cannery. Obviously, therefore, rather than have organised protests from the canneries against such exploitation, the can companies prefer to encourage the canneries "to take it out of labour."

Dispossessed farmers, casualised and exploited farm workers and millions of useless acres of once rich farmland have followed in the wake of the efficiency experts in the U.S.A. who have brought big business into agriculture and used improved farm machinery for a system of monoculture designed to snatch the maximum cash profit, for a few years, from the soil. The irrigated valleys of Arizona, where once prosperous communities of small farmers produced milk and fruit on a balanced agricultural system, have become desert sweat-shops since, almost over-night, they were up-rooted by large-scale industrialised agriculture. Local government ceased to exist, unemployment became a crucial problem, likewise rural health.

Our land in Britain needs fresh capital. Some of our farms are too small (some are also too big), and the shape and size of some of our fields might well be altered. Many farmers might, with advantage, pay a little more attention to book-keeping, and we are not, Heaven knows, 100 per cent. efficient on the land, even by standards that a first-class farmer who cared for the fertility of his soil would accept. There is plenty of room for progress in all these respects, and we still have far to go in applying mechanical power to this business of farming. Mr. McWilliams's account makes terrible reading, as does any such monument to the grosser follies of man, but for us it should be an invaluable record for showing us how not to allow our farming industry to develop.

L. F. EASTERBROOK

DISPLACED PERSON

Death My Generation. By MICHAEL FYODROV. *Jarrolds.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Fyodrov is a piece of unfinished business of the war of 1914–1918; a displaced person blown out of his cranny by the Russian Revolution, whirled along the Transiberian Railway, down through Harbin, through Manchuria, over the Pacific to America, across the Atlantic to France, to England. His education varied in quality as the anti-Communist passions of the rich noodles of America waxed and waned, his mother living on the proceeds of her virulent articles about the Red-Jewish Menace. It was she who introduced Henry Ford to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and for a time the family was sustained and nourished by the *Dearborn Independent*. That came to an end, however, and the easy flow of dollars from Ford was transmuted by an unfair alchemy to a trickle of cents from the *Gentile Tribune* of Oliphant (Penn.). That in its turn dried up and the family migrated to England—which, after all, produced Houston Stewart Chamberlain. It would all make an interesting story, no doubt, but Mr. Fyodrov has his preoccupations. . . . On page 47 we are plunged into a jolly group rape of a girl called Dot undertaken by a number of the author's teen-age playmates. On page 59 it's Nicolette.

> Ah, yes, let me tell you about the daughter. Small, well built, with the same black eyes and olive skin of her father, Nicolette taught Mathematics to the lower grades.

Soon Mr. Fyodrov is out of the lower grades, and on page 66 is demonstrating to all comers that his voice has broken.

> Jaqueline—Bébé as we called her. How difficult it is to bridge the years and recall the thrill of our first kiss on the steps leading down from the Sacré Cœur in Montmartre one Christmas Eve. She was only seventeen—my age. Slim, still more a girl than a woman, she was just what her name implied—a child."

It is all very beautiful until page 68 :—

> And then came Jeanne, with soft round shoulders, whom I met at a *bal musette*. And I, too, forgot . . .

On page 69 Jeanne is flung aside for Yvonne, whose radiant and burning love flickers and dies before page 70, when an American art student called Lilian blows in for a one-night stand. Lilian's love is so overpowering that we get a whole five pages free of the primal urge before Genevieve appears :—

> . . . was it pre-ordained that our bedrooms should be next each other, and that in my hanging cupboard there should be a door, long locked, which communicated with her room? Was it all written down a thousand years ago when imponderable substances fused into living cells and they mated in primordial oceans?

On page 80 it's the ponderable substance of Laure :—

> A very young girl with a small oval face ringed with black curls, and two large very serious eyes.

And on page 82 an anonymous lady of Douarnenez makes a flitting appearance.

Aged twenty-one, and in the pink of condition, the author comes to England, but fate, the economic crisis, and perhaps just plain wear and tear, intervene. The old flame flickers into life for lovely Natalie Bogary, for Alice, and Mary, but otherwise Mr. Fyodrov confines himself to changing jobs and chewing over old newspaper files. Here is a not unfair imitation of the resulting dullness:

> As I set out for my office that morning Mr. Chamberlain was in his 'plane on the way to Munich, the Americans were telling the world that box-car loadings had again fallen off, and C. B. Cochran's new revue was playing to packed houses; little did we know . . .

There is also a certain amount of painful reading when Mr. Fyodrov slips into a white shirt and eats the pro-Nazi words he wrote in the first four or five years of Hitler's little adventure. The defendant pleads that he was badly brought up and never had a chance. In the end we strike a soundly moral note, the wages of sin is death, or a fate worse than death. After deciding "it's my country, white or red," and being for a time associated with that sparkling periodical *Russia To-day*, the author ends up rewriting Russian war correspondents' messages as a sub-editor on *Soviet War News*. If you're thinking of horsing around with the girls, boys, look what happened to Fyodrov. ANTONY WEST

SOVIET SATIRE

Animal Farm. By GEORGE ORWELL. *Secker.* 6*s.*

In a world choked everywhere with suffering, cruelty and exploitation, the disillusioned idealist may be embarrassed by the rich choice of objects for denunciation. He runs the risk of twisting himself into knots, as he discovers enemies, first to the Right, then to the Left and, most invigorating, at home amongst his friends. He may try to solve his dilemma by deciding on some particular Power-figure as the embodiment of Evil, concentrating upon it all his wealth of frustration and righteous indignation. If he remains only a critic and fails to turn his talent to the search for a practical remedy for a specific evil, he is likely, in time, to decide that all the world is evil and that human nature is itself incorrigible. The alternatives then—we see many contemporary instances—are cynicism or religion and mysticism.

Mr. Orwell's Devils have been numerous and, since he is a man of integrity, he chooses real

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evils to attack. His latest satire, beautifully written, amusing and, if you don't take it too seriously, a fair corrective of much silly worship of the Soviet Union, suggests to me that he is reaching the exhaustion of idealism and approaching the bathos of cynicism. He began as a civil servant, honestly indignant with the misdeeds of the British Empire as he saw it in the Far East. During the Spanish war, a sincere anti-Fascist, he found, like many others of his temperament, that of all the warring groups the most idealistic and least smirched were the anarchists. The fact that they would infallibly have lost the war while the Republican coalition might, in slightly more favourable circumstances, have won it, did not affect his onslaught. At the outset of the World War he repented his past. Realising that Nazi Germany was now an even worse enemy than the British Empire or the Negrin Government, he wrote denouncing the Left, scarcely noticing that it was his own back he was lashing, and that his blows often fell short of others who had not made the mistakes with which he charged them. Now that Germany is defeated, it seems almost accidental that his righteous indignation is turned not, say, against the Americans for their treatment of Negroes, but against the Soviet Union. In Stalin he finds the latest incarnation of Evil.

There is plenty in the U.S.S.R. to satirise, and Mr. Orwell does it well. How deftly the fairy story of the animals who, in anticipation of freedom and plenty, revolt against the tyrannical farmer, turns into a rollicking caricature of the Russian Revolution! His shafts strike home. We all know of the sheep, who drown discussion by the bleating of slogans; we have all noticed, with a wry smile, the gradual change of Soviet doctrine under the pretence that it is no change and then that the original doctrine was an anti-Marxist error. (The best thing in Mr. Orwell's story is the picture of the puzzled animals examining the Original Principles of the Revolution, and finding them altered: "All animals are equal," said the slogan; to which is added, "but some are more equal than others.") The falsehoods about Trotsky, whose part in the revolutionary period, only secondary to Lenin's, has been gradually erased from the Soviet history books, is another fair count against Stalinite methods. The story of the loyal horse who worked until his lungs burst and was finally sent off to the knackers' yard is told with a genuine pathos; it represents a true and hateful aspect of every revolutionary struggle. Best of all is the character of the donkey who says little, but is always sure that the more things change the more they will be the same, that men will always be oppressed and exploited whether they have revolutions and high ideals or not.

The logic of Mr. Orwell's satire is surely the ultimate cynicism of Ben, the donkey. That, if I read Mr. Orwell's mind correctly, is where his idealism and disillusion has really landed him. But he has not quite the courage to see that he has lost faith, not in Russia but in mankind. So the surface moral of his story is that all would have gone well with the revolution if the wicked Stalin had not driven the brave and good Trotsky out of Eden. Here Mr. Orwell ruins what should have been a very perfect piece of satire on human life. For by putting the Stalin-Trotsky struggle in the centre he invites every kind of historical and factual objection. We are brought from the general to the particular; to the question why Stalin decided to attempt the terrific feat of creating an independent Socialist country rather than risk plunging Russia unprepared into a war of intervention by stirring up revolution in neighbouring countries. Mr. Orwell may say it would have been better if this policy had prevailed, but a moment's thought will evoke in him the brilliant satire he would have written about the betrayal of the revolution, if Trotsky, who was as ruthless a revolutionary as Stalin, had won the day and lost the revolution by another route. This same error compels the reader to ask whether in fact it is true that the Commissar to-day is indistinguishable in ideals and privilege from the Tzarist bureaucrat and the answer is that though many traditional Russian characteristics survive in Russia, the new ruling class is really very different indeed from anything that Russia has known before. In short, if we read the satire as a gibe at the failings of the U.S.S.R. and realise that it is historically false and neglectful of the complex truth about Russia, we shall enjoy it and be grateful for our laugh. But which will Mr. Orwell do next? Having fired his bolt against Stalin, he could return to the attack on British or American Capitalism as seen through the eyes say, of an Indian peasant; the picture would be about as true or as false. Alternatively, there is the Church of Rome, Yogi, or at a pinch, the more tedious effort to help find the solution of any of the problems that actually face Stalin, Mr. Attlee, Mr. Orwell and the rest of us.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

Week-end Competitions

No. 815

Set by John Lilburne

A recent B.B.C. news bulletin announced that th Nazi war criminals are to be provided with "whole some and improving novels" whilst awaiting tria The usual prizes are offered for a chit from a Militar official (of 200 words), stating with reasons, wh novels should be supplied to two of the prominen prisoners now in Allied hands. Each prisoner allowed only one book. Entries by September 18th

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 81

Set by Roger Marvell

War discredits the notion of pleasure so that w now need to relearn its value. Six guineas a offered for decalogues inculcating pleasure in te rhymed couplets.

Report by Roger Marvell

The entrants obviously enjoyed recommendin enjoyment. Some of the advice reflected too closel the writer's personal preferences: G. J. Blundell for instance, writes:—

Sleep thou on feathers, not on barbarous springs . . .
Wilcox than Eliot has an easier strain . . .
Let all thy symphonies be Mendelssohn's . . .

all of which advice is not calculated to add to m pleasure. Elizabeth Clutterbuck again seems to forge how various are the concepts of pleasure.

Let other passions than "the Party" rule,
And cut thy lectures at the Summer School.

Nor, I fear, can I go the whole way with N.B.:

Surely true happiness in music is
Listening to a piece by Arthur Bliss.

The runners-up are W. Stewart, R. J. P. Hewison E. W. Fordham and D. H., from the last of whom may quote two commandments:

New books you handle
Again shall be a pleasure, not a scandal.
A roaring fire on
Thou shalt in hot baths soak nor fear a siren.

I recommend that the prize money be divide between Allan M. Laing, Sir Robert Witt, Constanc Sewell, Stanley J. Sharpless, Leslie Johnson, William Bliss and James C. Sloan.

Thou shalt not lightly sacrifice a joy,
For virtue sad and soured must ever cloy.

Thou shalt indulge they senses, nor look down
Upon the body's pleasures with a frown.

Jolly Well BETTER thanks!

the attack was soon over.

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Though simple satisfactions seem most kind,
Thou shalt not scorn the pleasures of the mind.

Thou shalt with joys uncomradely dispense,
Avoiding pleasure at the world's expense.

With lewd intention thou shalt not defile
The forthright candour of another's smile.

Be not too swift to censure strange delight,
For one man's black is oft another's white.

Thy cheerful moods thou shalt with comrades share;
But melancholy's not a gaud to wear.

Yet ape not thou the conduct of the cad,
Parading mirth when all around are sad.

Nor shalt thou, in this land, commit the crime
Of gay loquaciousness at breakfast time.

Thou shalt not strive thy eager soul to bless
With measureless, unmingled happiness.

ALLAN M. LAING

"Pleasure's a sin," the Puritans insist,
Then "Sin's a pleasure," cries the Hedonist.

Progress proclaims the need for greater leisure,
Then spend it richly in pursuit of pleasure.

Ascetics, Stoics, preach the claims of duty,
Do thine and cultivate the joys of beauty.

Profit and pleasure meet not here below
Take then the pleasure, let the profit go.

Gather ye rosebuds, mortals, while ye may,
The mood, allegro, and the time, to-day.

Yearning to spend to-day, go forth and borrow,
So prudence bids, there may be no to-morrow.

Eschew those "pleasures too refined to please."
On sun-lit turf take thy unquestioned ease.

On earth men labour to build up their treasure,
Watch them at work and it becomes a pleasure.

Excess of pleasure sometimes tends to grief,
"Pleasure that's all but pain" will give relief.

A decalogue suggests commandments ten,
Pleasure requires their breaking—now and then.

SIR ROBERT WITT

Thou shalt no more bemoan they dear time's waste,
Delights increase in cultivating taste.

Admire the civil: the heroic and the tough
Have banged about the place for long enough.

Thou shalt on no account make do and mend,
Money makes poorer those who cannot spend.

Burn all near silk, all almost-china break;
The genuine gives more pleasure than the fake.

Travel—some treasures have escaped destruction,
Observe how they surpass their reproduction.

Mark from the stately dome, or summer palace,
Constructive gifts are man's as well as malice.

Lunch at the welcoming inn, the mayonnaise,
Not soya bean, the service beyond praise.

Freely call all the publicists misleading
And guiltless flout historians' partial reading.

At sudden guests thou shalt rejoice and sing,
Laundry comes back, there's cake, ale, everything.

Enrichment find in variousness of race—
When blood is wiped from everybody's face.

CONSTANCE SEWELL

Thou war-tired, would-be sybarite,
Abstain no longer from delight.

Shrug off that Old Man of the Sea—
"Duration of Emergency."

The sweets of pleasure are no sin,
Dip deeply in Life's saccharin.

When Circe comes, with laughing eyes,
Thy duty is to fraternise.

De-slum thyself from khaki drear,
To Art lend an attentive ear.

Cancel that dazed and browned-off look,
And limber up with Keats and Gluck.

Dine out; book nothing less than stalls;
Spring clean; try cream-distempered walls.

Lie prone in baths 'neath tingling showers,
Soak sensuously for hours and hours.

Whate'er thou need'st, be not denied;
Thy post-war credits will provide.

Since now at last there's global pax,
Thus saith the Lord: Thou Shalt Relax.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Waste not the golden hours by asking whence is
True pleasure's spring, but use your sense—and senses.

Cast for the leading part on pleasure's stage
In youth the body, but the mind in age.

Think not contentment and delight the same.
A banked-up fire is not a blazing flame.

Shun not the toils of love if you would dwell
In heights of ecstasy—and depths of hell.

Summon from music, with its dying strain,
Pleasure that hovers on the brink of pain.

Let nose and eyes and palate all combine
To savour well the precious gift of wine.

Ye shall not chain-smoke. Habit never gave
The least degree of relish to its slave.

Can you perform your daily round with zest?
Make work a pleasure, and you're doubly blest.

Learn from the child, intent upon its toy,
To pluck from ordinary things a joy.

Here is the place, and now the time, to say,
"I, too, have lived in Arcady—to-day."

LESLIE JOHNSON

When Adam fell, God's Curse was this:—
That Man must Work. (See *Genesis*.)

I draw then this Conclusion just:
No man should work unless he must.

Man was, 'tis clear, first made for Pleasure,
Then labour only to gain Leisure.

Who drinks not Wine does scarce exist,
Then learn to be a Hedonist.

Since Life's a Series of Sensations,
Study Life's myriad Permutations.

Enjoy them all—just short of Sin—
And thus both Earth and Heaven you'll win.

What proves man better than the beast?
Man knows, Enough is *not* a Feast.

A Feast is better than Enough,
And *Quantum* merely is not *Suff*.

So, while avoiding all Excess,
Prefer the Greater to the Less.

Magnums are twice as good as bottles—
That's Logic—mine and Aristotle's.

WILLIAM BLISS

Thou shalt not walk with City folk or such
As fill each fleeting minute overmuch,
But rather seek the company of those
Who know the worth of silence and repose.
Hear music, neither read nor talk the while,
So shall it calm your soul, your heart beguile.
When fools or cozeners shall cross your path,
Let them be food for mirth, and not for wrath.
Thou shalt not, for politeness sake say "Yes,"
And spend a tedious evening in distress,
But rather with a smile say firmly, "No,
I do not care to dine with So-and-so."
For half the art of pleasure's to eschew
The doing of things you have to do.
At what thy neighbour does, thou shalt not scoff,
At gardening, fishing, bowls, or darts or golf,
Lest in thy turn such passion seize on thee;
So shalt thou live in peace and amity.
Know that enjoyment sought is ofttimes missed,
Pleasure, like love, shall come as it shall list.

JAMES A. C. SLOAN

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LABOUR Monthly, September, 1945. "From War to Peace," R. P. Dutt; "Nuclear Energy and the Future"; also articles by Joseph Reeves, M.P., Fred Longden, M.P., J. R. Campbell, R. Page Arnot. Book Reviews. Publishers, 134 Ballards Lane, N.3. Post pd. 7*d.*

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